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# RAZZORCAKE

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

2001-2011

#65

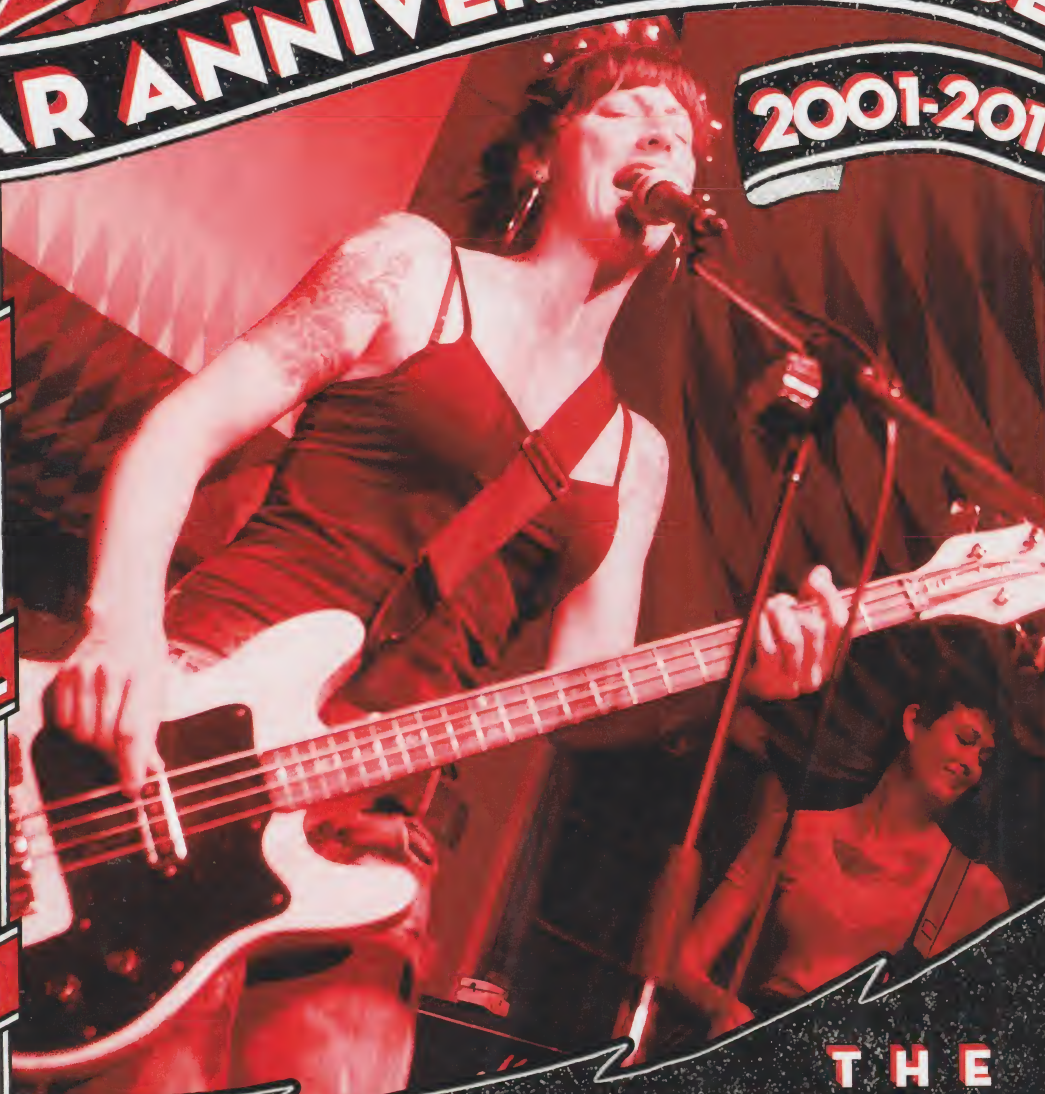
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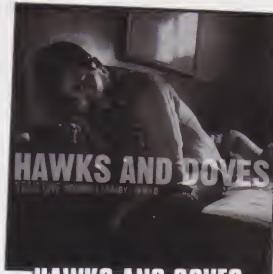
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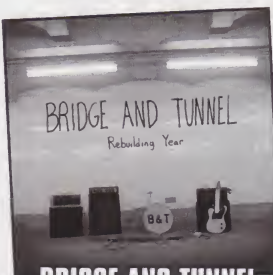
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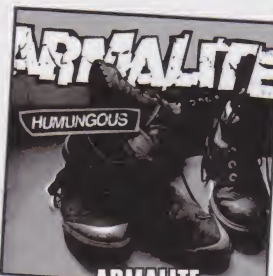
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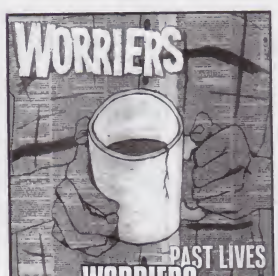
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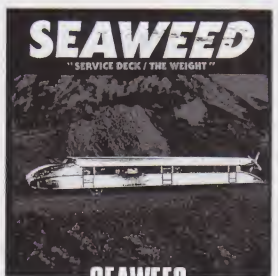
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*Razorcake* believes in a form of punk that is community-friendly, truly independent, positive, progressive, relevant, and exciting.

It is currently a magazine, website, book, and record publisher providing the highest quality content possible in a culture that is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and exploited.

We are a cohesive home and forum for over 120 independent volunteer writers, photographers, and illustrators around the world. In the first ten years of existence, *Razorcake* has published over 19,864 reviews of independent records, videos, zines, comic books, and live shows. We also post a weekly podcast of independent music (181 and counting).

Our open participation and solicitation policy means that anybody can potentially become a contributor.

Collectively, we provide a legitimate, critical, alternative, non-profit approach to music and are the only bonafide 501(c)(3) non-profit music magazine in America. Although *Razorcake* champions the local and has a national presence, *Razorcake* also self-administers international distribution of the magazine to over twenty countries.

If *Razorcake* disappeared, the strength of the community we are apart of and have created will be weakened.

## We believe the following...

DIY punk is a valid, continually evolving culture and that outside corporate interests in DIY punk have overwhelmingly been predatory. We're still waiting for an example to the contrary.

It is *Razorcake*'s goal to continue building a viable twenty-first century framework that supports DIY culture and truly independent punk.

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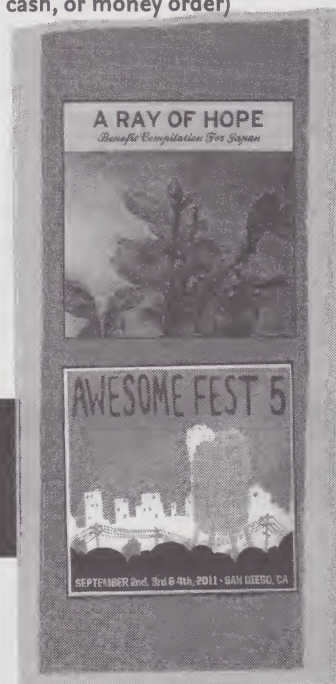
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# RAZORCAKE

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As many of you probably already know, *Razorcake* is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly from us—regardless of amount—have been essential components to our continued survival.

If, by any odd chance, you made taxable income this year, you don't want to pay Uncle Sam the full amount, and a tax-deductible donation would help you out, remember that *Razorcake* is a bona-fide charity.

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## PLEASE HELP US TO CONTINUE DOING OUR PART





## A Decade of Paper Cuts

It feels like I've been beaten up. No one's laid a finger on me. It feels like my legs have been poured into concrete molds, my back punched. It's all my own doing. I know that. My eyes are red, puffy, wiggly. My mind races. There's no shortage of worries, tasks, deadlines, unfinished work, next steps. This is a marathon where the finish line keeps getting pushed farther off. There's a scratch on my chin and a red line trickling down the right side of my mouth that wasn't there last night when I went to lay down. I did this to myself. I keep doing this to myself. Fighting myself. Nobody's forcing me to do this.

This isn't a complaint. It's an observation. Right now, ragged and facing a mountain of work, it's just not how I thought the celebration would be. The end of ten full years of independent publishing. Sixty-five on-time, bi-monthly fanzines. Over 7,000 pages. 20,000 reviews. Twenty books. Paper zines going up against the explosion of the internet. A tiny business amid a global financial meltdown and a United States Postal Service system that whips small publishers around. To what end? So Razorcake can celebrate bands most people have never heard of? To follow a simple ideology: large corporations will always take more from underground cultures than they'll give back? Sometimes, it feels like a beating.

What most people remember of Don Quixote is that he was batshit crazy. He attacked windmills, convinced they were giants. I can relate on those levels—tilting windmills seems like my last Thursday, battling downtown traffic on my bike with Daryl. What I admire in Don Quixote is his fearlessness. He took his beatings for what he thought was good, right, and chivalric in his world. He meted out his

justice and attacked. He wore a barber's shaving bowl as a helmet, convinced it was rare and collectible. I can relate. Shit, man, I have black vinyl records from twenty-five years ago. They're probably worth less than a quarter, but they're part of my personal armor, a deep part of me that only a few recognize the value in. When I try to explain music to non-believers, I'm the one looked at as plum loco.

It's these paradoxes that trouble me and keep me going. "Punk rock is a phase." "Punk rock is for the kids." "Punk rock is inherently destructive." "Punk rock is in the past." "Punk rock is full of bad ideas poorly executed." "Dude, no one gives a fuck. Get over it." Oh, I'm acutely aware of its limitations, its imperfections. I'm also aware of its potential, its beauty, and its multifaceted and transmogrifying power (look no further than Jason Willis's cover this issue, the Street Eaters, The Gateway District, and James Arthur).

Still, I believe in what Razorcake's about more than I did a decade ago and it's largely intangible. The ephemerality of listening to a great record. Interviewing bands that help reinforce that we're not alone. Slap-bump handshakes, high fives, and shared joy and work. Having a ten-year conversation in these pages with my best friends. I know this physical pain in my body, this heaviness beating down on me, will pass. I will celebrate soon—feel those little lightning bolts of joy. This is a cycle from sorrow to joy back to sorrow. This is living.

...and I still haven't gotten over the fact that someone turning twenty-one today was *eleven* when Razorcake first started. Trippy.

—Todd Taylor

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"In this post-post everything  
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context. Intent. Meaning. They  
can't co-op and repackage  
integrity and honesty."

—Alex Leech, *Jerk Store #9*

This issue is dedicated to the marriages of Bradley Thomas Beshaw and Lara Shizuko Kidoguchi, Rachel Murray and Mario Framingheddu.

Teach your  
children well.

Jimmy the  
Zom-baby,  
now a healthy  
bouncing  
cheesehead...



**THANK YOU:** No, Duck Fou, buddy. Jason Willis, you make us look like chimps shoving digital bananas into digital square holes, smearing it all over, graphically speaking for Daryl and myself. Fuck, that cover's great; A picture is worth 1,968 words thanks for Brad Beshaw's illo. that fully inspired Sean's column this issue; That's sparkly stuff in them thar molars thanks to Nation of Amanda for her illo. in Jim's column; Why is the slip always pink? Like for getting the axe and drag racing? thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Nerf's column; And how do you do? ::handshake:: welcome Liz Prince to Razorcake's roster of columnists; I just looked this up on the interwebs. That's textbook brain surgery for rockers who include soccer, Nascar, and wars in foreign lands as awesome in their videos thanks to Jason Armadillo for his illo. in Chicken's column; Never thought of the razor in the cake being a frosting-leaking devil lock, but I like it thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Dale's column; Dick Dale helps us all feel young... or at least younger thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Gary's column; If there were no dips in the road, no reason to question, it'd be called a cult thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Amy's column; Hey, whoah! it's Paul J. Comeau in a guest column slot; Which side you on? Gorilla Biscuits or Brook Brothers? thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Paul's column; Texas plays by its own rules... from Roky to Cottage Cheese from the Lips of Death to this fine sir fuckin' with the airwaves, James Arthur. Thanks to Ryan Leach and Renate Winter for the interview and photos; Observation. Hypothesis. Experimentation. Conclusion. Bam! That's science thanks to Adrian Chi, El Diablo, Shanty Cheryl, and Selena Mone for the Street Eaters interview, photos, and transcription help; I hope people understand I was going for the underlying metaphor of unnecessary destruction in the name of ill-conceived progress thanks to Rachel Murray, El Diablo, and Lauren Measure for their photos and Gateway District interview layout; I'm thinking it's Diego Rivera Buddha, but Craig Horky says it's just "some random old punk dude." He drew the illo. for the One Punk's Guide article, so take his word for it; Reviewing is like doing ballet in a butcher shop... or explaining quantum physics with balloon animals... something, something... don't understand Frank Zappa thanks to the following for their record, book, zine, and video reviews: Bryan Static, Ian Wise, Craven Rock, Ty Stranglehold, Chris Mason, MP Johnson, Sean Koeppenick, Keith Rosson, Kurt Morris, Sal Lucci, Art Ettinger, Kristen K., Joe Evans III, Jeff Proctor, CT Terry, Adrian Salas, Juan Espinosa, Samantha Beerhouse, Paul J. Comeau, Donreviewsrecords, Vincent, Billups Allen, Maddy, Mark Twistworthy, Ryan Horky, Rene Navarro, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Nerf, Mike Frame, Nick Toerner, Andy Conway, Steve Hart, Dave Brainwreck, and Katie Dunne; The following volunteers helped us out in so many different ways, from paper routing Razorcake, to proofing, to interwebbing, to Photoshopping and beyond. We'd be a lot less without their help: Kari Hamanaka, Candice Tobin, Josh Rosa, Dondoesbulk, Donna Ramone, John Barlog, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jeff Proctor, Toby Tober, Marty Ploy, Chris Baxter, Mary-Clare Stevens, Daniel Segura, Matt Braun, Tatiana Bliss, Adrian Chi, and Matthew Hart.



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# RAZORCAKE

Issue #65 Dec. 2011 / Jan. 2012

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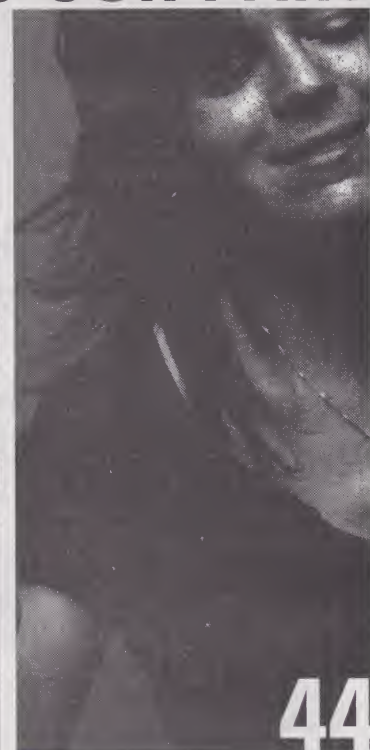
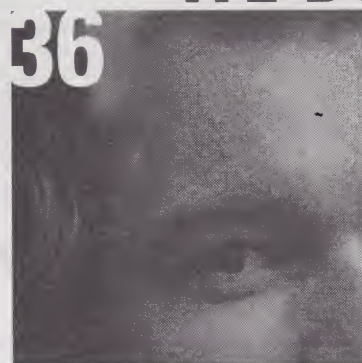
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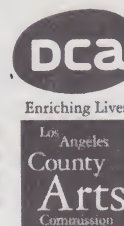
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## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**"Nothing left to do but howl."**



# MAKE A MONSTER OUT OF ME

Brad Beshaw, who has been illustrating my column for years, is getting married. The wedding will occur, is occurring, and has occurred in that bizarre unfolding of time that forever remains between when I write this column and when you read it. And because that time is not timeless for Brad, he warned me that he wouldn't be able to illustrate this column. I wouldn't stand for such a crime against *Razorcake*. I insisted he must illustrate. So he offered a compromise. He sent me an illustration for a story he told me once, and I'm to tell this story as my column.

It's no problem. I remember the story perfectly because I was drunk when Brad told it to me. We sat on the curb in front of the now-defunct Confounded Books. I was on tour in Seattle. Because nothing ever happens when one tours, because no stories are told in cars from destination to destination, because I never mix-up details anyway, I know I can tell the story exactly as I heard it. So here's Brad's story. I take no responsibility.

Tucked away in the Allegheny foothills of western Pennsylvania is a town called Nanty Glo. The iron ore is so dense in the ground that all compasses point straight down and rivers run rusty. In the nineteenth century,

Nanty Glo was home to various chimney furnaces. Locals leveled forests and filled the chimneys with old-growth pines that burned hot enough to melt the ore into steel. The chimneys and the men who operated them devoured the forests in the foothills to feed an industrial addiction to steel. The new trees that grew in place of the pines evolved a talent for swaying their trunks like a hula dancer sways her hips. The graceful glide of the tree trunks forever evaded the next generation of axmen. A new era of the supernatural was born.

Every child in Nanty Glo grew up to become a monster.

Brad grew up in Nanty Glo.

In elementary school, Brad learned about the world the way the rest of the kids in Nanty Glo did. In science class, he learned the physics of how horsemen can ride headless. He participated in class experiments by beheading local groundhogs and chipmunks, then setting their specter free to taunt the spades of nearby Amish farmers. Because it was an agricultural town, they learned how to genetically modify beans to grow into beanstalks that reached the clouds. They grew carrots so large that families could hollow out the center and live inside.

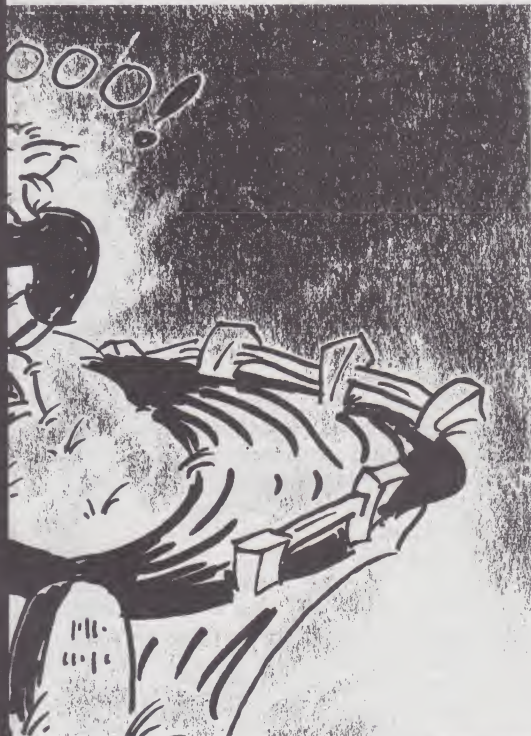
The school itself, in fact, had been dug out of a giant beet. Generations of students brought pocket knives to school and carved midday snacks from the beethouse walls. The kids of the town learned to make little golems from cow manure. They developed elaborate games with the golems. Golem masters assigned the creatures special powers based upon the number revealed when the kids rolled their twenty-sided dice.

Brad wanted no part in all this madness. When he should have been in English class studying the works of Washington Irving or Mary Shelley, he read the true American literary master, Charles Schultz, and tried to model his life after those Minnesota kids. Brad dreamed of growing a round head twice the size of his body like any other normal kid. He tried to train his dog to sleep atop a doghouse. He gave his best friend a blanket at every Christmas, praying that, just once, his buddy would show up to school with the blanket hanging from one shoulder. It was all to no avail. Sooner or later, Brad knew, he'd succumb to the will of Nanty Glo. He'd become his own monster.

While he had no choice whether or not to become a monster, he did have some choice regarding which type of monster he'd



become. He spent a lot of his freshman year floating between different monsters, trying to decide which group to join. The zombies in his study hall were easy enough to get along with. Sure, they liked to gnaw on brains, but they didn't haunt you with their brain cravings. Instead, they bought brains by the quarter ounce from a guy named Manny. Brad knew Manny. He wasn't a bad dude. Manny



BRAD BESHAW

was friendly enough do stop alongside a farm road one time when he saw Brad pushing his bike, which seemed to forever have a flat tire. Manny stopped, let Brad stow his bike between the captain's chairs in the back of Manny's customized van, and drove Brad home. They didn't talk much. Brad turned down Manny's offer for a free quarter of brains. He just wasn't ready to get a job cooking pizzas to finance the habit.

Most of the vampires in Brad's Home Ec class were gay, though a few were bi. The bi vampires were the most dangerous, as far as the high school girls were concerned, because bi vampires break one of the two rules of vampiredom: be sexually desirable and sexually unavailable. What the adolescent vampire groupies really wanted was someone to fall in love with who would be biologically opposed to hooking up with them. Bi vampires crossed the line. Brad liked the idea of crossing the line. He wasn't so much into the other half of the bi. Plus, there were so many rules to being a vampire. Every time Brad thought of trying to keep the rules straight, he got bored and started drawing pictures of big-headed, Midwestern kids.

The problem was, Heather was into vampires.

I'm sure Brad's high school crush was named Heather. I'm sure I didn't use that name because Brad and I are the same

generation, and seventy-percent of the girls of our generation are named Jennifer, Michelle, or Heather. I know I remember this story perfectly because Brad told it to me only nine years ago, and he was speaking into my deaf ear.

The first time Brad set foot inside Heather's bedroom, he thought he'd stepped into Shangri-la. It wasn't exactly the pleasure dome of majestic waterfalls and caverns as dark and endless as your favorite nightmare. The only virgin erupting in song was Heather, and she hadn't erupted so much as managed to mumble along with "Just like Heaven." Unfortunately, it was not the Dinosaur Jr. version. What Brad did step foot in, literally, was a Green Lantern comic. Not a valuable one. Brad had seen the same issue in a dollar box at the comics store in Pittsburgh. In fact, Brad saw more comics from the dollar box on the floor of Heather's bedroom than he saw carpeting. She had a pressed-wood bookshelf that held all the comics in mylar, but the lion's share of the comics were on the floor. Heather sat in a nest of glossy, full-color superheroes and villains. Brad built his own seat of cast-off comics and settled in next to her.

Heather said, "It's lame, but my favorite is actually Archie."

Brad smiled. Anyone into Archie comics could understand his own obsession with Charles Schultz. Could he confess? Could he open up to her and acknowledge that he'd read thirty years of daily Peanuts, every single strip Charles Schultz had written? Or should he keep that to himself and merely dream that Peanuts and Archie are equally odd and they were thus perfectly matched? He said, "I like Archie."

"Who are you, then?" she asked. "Jughead?"

"Shit, no. I'm Archie."

"And who are you going to pick? Betty or Veronica?"

Brad looked at Heather's hair. A shock of blond shot up her jet-black beehive. Brad couldn't decide if she was Veronica with a little Betty on the side or Betty in a world demanding Veronicas. He avoided taking a side. He raised one eyebrow and smiled. He hoped it was a mysterious smile.

Heather pulled the comic from her purse. "This is my favorite," she said. "It's Archie and vampires." She passed the comic to Brad.

He held it gently, careful to avoid fingerprints on the cover. The title screamed out to him: *Riverdale Runs Wild*. Reggie glared at the reader with fangs exposed. Betty and Veronica held onto each of his arms. Archie cowered in the corner, arm outstretched, a cross in his shaking hand. Brad handed the comic back without opening it.

"You're not turning vampire, are you?" Heather asked.

Brad shrugged.

"You're a werewolf all the way." She rubbed Brad's face. He'd shaved that morning and again after school. Still, he was halfway

to growing a full beard. His eyebrows had grown fuzzy and peculiar as a Bigfoot photo. He wasn't hairy so much as furry.

He'd tried to convince himself that hair growing in new places and his constant desire to roam around the streets at night, howling at the moon was just puberty, but Heather knew better. And what Brad knew better was that Heather was into vampires.

That doesn't mean he didn't try. He drew her into the comics of his life: a big-headed, bee-hived bride. He shared the comics with her. He sang her songs of wild nights while she studied blood rich diets and dreamed of fangs. He dug up soft iron from the riverbank and formed it into tiny, living tigers for her to play with after her homework was done. He took long rides with her, through the hills and forests all the way to the psychiatric hospital that stood like a castle over the feudal ghosts of Nanty Glo. She sat patiently as he glued one more patch onto his bike tube. She teased him that it was more patch than tube. Brad laughed and hoped she wouldn't notice how long and sharp his fingernails had gotten.

It didn't matter much anyway. For all of Brad's best efforts, Heather fell into a swoon when the first bi vampire turned a glance her way. The bi vampire donned his best bow tie and asked Heather to the Psych Hospital dance. He said to her, "Would you care to join me?" and she said, "Yes," before he hit the "I" in the word "would."

Brad didn't quite give up. He donned his best long sleeve T-shirt and cargo pants and peddled his bike up the hospital road. At the very least, he figured he could steal a slow dance. But it wasn't meant to be. His bike tire gave out halfway up the hill. He was out of patches and out of glue. Nothing left to do but howl at the tube.

I wasn't sure exactly why Brad had told me this story. I know I memorized every word as it came out of his mouth. I remember he had my undivided attention because I'd taken two hits of acid and was driving down a freeway, texting a friend I only knew through Facebook when he told me the story. I remember trying to console him. I told him not to worry. Vampire, werewolf, or zombie, it doesn't matter. We all leave high school, get through our twenties, reconstruct ourselves out of the dead, plug into a mainframe and—like a flash of lightning—become Frankenstein's monster. It's not that bad. Sure, at least vampires and werewolves and zombies are their own monsters. And, sure, the bummer about being Frankenstein's monster is that you don't even have your own name; your whole identity is tied to your maker and your master. But it's not that bad.

I remember I even rubbed the node on my neck to reassure myself.

Brad shook his head. He told me I got it all wrong. He said that makers and masters and the days of Nanty Glo never go away completely. But, he said, we all get to be our own monster eventually.

—Sean Carswell





# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"I liked him  
until he started  
drawing a penis  
on my face."**

## The Sea in Me

I never should have asked the oral surgeon's assistant to define "bone material."

She was explaining the steps involved with extracting a broken tooth and putting in an implant. After the surgeon's team drilled a hole in the roof of my mouth and inserted a titanium screw, they'd pack it with "bone material" that would hold the screw in place and assist the healing process.

I asked if the "bone material" was natural or synthetic.

"Natural," she replied.

I raised an eyebrow.

"Are you squeamish?" she asked.

"No, just curious."

"The bone material," she explained, "comes from cows, cadavers, and coral. But it's ground up into really fine pieces."

My tongue instinctively went to the jagged hole in my upper right molar—the tooth dentistry professionals refer to as Number Two, but in my mind it's Number One since, like most people, I've had my wisdom teeth taken out. Number Two was one of the biggest teeth I had left. You could say I was attached to it—what was left of it anyway.

But did I really want to replace it with a Frankenstein-like combination of titanium screws and microscopic spare parts from farm animals, total strangers, and creatures from the bottom of the sea?

I needed a moment to think about that.

\*\*\*

The first thing I thought after I heard the crack and felt the tooth give way inside my mouth was, "Oh shit."

The second thing was, "I can probably get some drugs for this."

Such is the life of the mind of a recovering addict. My desire for another state of mind is so powerful that spitting up a chunk of broken tooth into my bathroom sink feels like a blessing.

But after I broke my tooth, I could think of little else. Hydrocodone. Poor man's Vicodin.

The only problem was it didn't hurt. Not one bit. While it was disconcerting to have a jagged hole in my mouth where part of my tooth had been, I'd had a root canal in that tooth several years before. That means I'd had the nerve in the tooth removed, so I was feeling no pain. Twelve years earlier it was a different story. I was eating lunch at my desk when the tooth cracked. I went to the dentist and they performed the root canal, installed a

post, and attached a porcelain crown to it. Even with insurance it was a ridiculously expensive procedure that left me terrified of taking a punch to the face and ruining all that dental work.

So when my tooth cracked earlier this year, not only did it not hurt, I wasn't sure what was cracking: the crown, the post, or what was left of the tooth.

Thankfully, I have excellent dental insurance. When my wife went in for a routine check-up last year and ended up needing a root canal, we were shocked by how much the insurance *didn't* cover, so I upgraded my dental coverage.

I'm sorry if it sounds like I'm bragging. I know I'm fortunate to have 1) a job and 2) insurance. But I don't have many "responsible adult moments."

A friend of mine once told me about the time he got a tattoo from a musician who played in a quasi-famous punk rock band. The tattoo artist was clean and sober. Although he'd turned his life around, he still had many of the same problems he had when he was living like a rock star, a fact that bewildered him. For example, even though he had more money in his pocket than ever before, he still couldn't pay his bills on time. He'd believed that drugs and alcohol made him a fuck-up, but now he was discovering all these flaws that he could no longer blame on the partying. He felt like even more of a fuck-up than when he was using.

I feel like that sometimes. It's hard not to when I'm confronted with things I didn't forget to do and can't blame on partying. I just didn't do it. No answer or explanation. So when I do something super responsible, like upgrading my dental coverage, I feel like I should get some kind of recognition for it, like a certificate for being a responsible member of society.

\*\*\*

My dentist is from Afghanistan. The ladies who do the dentist's billing and cover the phones at the desk are Mexican-American, like my wife. She's been going to this dentist for over a decade.

My dentist is fond of comparing Afghanistan and Mexico. Something about the countries being embroiled in drug wars, having fucked up governments, and liking goats.

To eat, I presume.

What's different about my dentist is he negotiates. He charges different prices for different customers, which is why I always bring my wife with me. And the ladies behind

the counter are wizards at squeezing money out of the insurance company. Long after a visit to the dentist, I'll get a check in the mail partially reimbursing me for various procedures.

Still, it's strange bartering with my dentist. It reminds me of my one and only visit to a Moroccan rug seller's shop. After all the haggling, it's almost a relief to get in the dentist's chair.

After the assistant took my X-rays, my dentist explained that the root of my tooth was cracked and I was going to need to see an oral surgeon. I was going to need an extraction and an implant. A very costly procedure.

"How costly?"

"Very costly."

Here we go again, I thought. However, he assured me that if I went to a particular oral surgeon, he could get me a good deal.

"What's a good deal?"

"About four thousand dollars."

"Four thousand dollars is a good deal for a car," I told him.

"Think about it."

\*\*\*

"Would you spend four grand to replace a missing tooth?" This is the question I asked of virtually everyone I knew. Most people seemed to think it was too much to pay.

"Which tooth?" they'd ask.

"Number Two," I'd say, pointing at my ruined molar, like I was some kind of expert.

Because the tooth wasn't visible, most of my friends told me they wouldn't have the procedure done. But I was surprised to discover how many of them either don't go to the dentist at all, or are extremely squeamish when they do.

Don't they know that's where the drugs are?

In any case, I was inclined to agree. I'd been thinking about taking a trip to Hawaii. I hadn't booked any flights or looked into any hotels, but it was something I'd been thinking about a lot: escape to a tropical place far, far away.

My wife, however, was on the oral surgeon's side.

There was no way I could afford to do both.

So I did the responsible thing. I asked my eight-year-old daughter what she thought I should do: get my tooth fixed or take the family to Hawaii.

I was pretty confident I knew what her answer would be.

"I think you should get your tooth fixed, daddy."



This caught me by surprise. So much so that sitting at the breakfast table drinking coffee while my daughter ate her cereal, I got a little choked up.

Was it possible that my eight-year-old daughter had a more responsible head on her shoulders than her fuck-up of a father? Was this a sign that she'd be spared the consequences of a lifetime of bad decisions and reckless behavior that I was still coming to terms with?

I really hoped so.

\*\*\*

My wife and I went back to the dentist. The ladies behind the counter chastised me for not making an appointment with the oral surgeon. I told them it was too much money. They told me it was important. I got philosophical. In the grand scheme of things, how important was a tooth really?

In other words, we haggled.

At the end of the day, they knocked down the price by twenty-five percent—provided I paid in advance.

Deal. Three thousand seemed like a lot less than four. My credit card took a beating, but I saved a grand.

\*\*\*

I drove to the oral surgeon's office in Sorrento Valley, a suburb to the north of San Diego where much of the region's pharmacy and biotech companies are located.

The oral surgeon was affable and friendly, and he had very small hands—an important attribute for someone who was going to spend a lot of time sticking them in my mouth. I liked him until he started drawing a penis on my face.

The oral surgeon had my x-rays up on the computer screen. He used a drawing tool to demonstrate where the extraction would take place, where the titanium screw would be drilled in, and where the implant would go. When he was gone, it looked like he'd made a crude drawing of a cock and balls in my mouth.

When he was done defacing my face, his assistant came in. She walked me through the steps. What the surgery would involve, what prescriptions I would need, and how I should take care of the wound.

She warned me that even through the hole would be sewed up, occasionally some grit would work its way through the tissue.

"By grit you mean bone material, right?"

"That's correct. Like a grain of sand."

Except it wasn't sand. It was grains of people and cows and coral.

I'd already paid for my surgery in full. There was nothing to do but go through with it.

\*\*\*

A few hours later I was standing in line at Sav-On paying three dollars and thirty cents for twenty pills of Hydrocodone.

This is how the insurance companies screw you: They don't pay when you have a



Was it possible that my eight-year-old daughter had a more responsible head on her shoulders than her fuck-up of a father?

metal screw drilled into your skull, but they practically give away the pain pills.

I remember thinking, "I could sell these drugs and use the money for better drugs." This seemed like a good plan at the time except that I've never sold a drug in my life. Drugs were for taking, not selling—especially now that the anesthesia was wearing and my body was coming to terms with the gaping hole, the metal screw, the fresh stitches.

I went home and lay in bed. I felt something in my mouth. That wasn't gauze or blood or stitches or screws.

Grit.

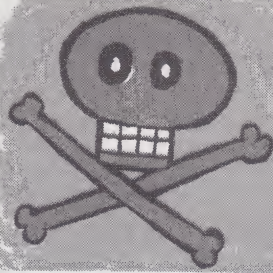
Bone material.

I took it out of my mouth and studied the bone material. It looked like a gray speck of sand.

Then I found another one, and another. Tiny particles of people, animals, and the sea, floating around inside me. I wasn't grossed out. Not in the least. There wasn't a single procedure that could repair the damage. It was going to take a lot of bits and pieces to fuse together and make me whole again. The sea in me would become me. Be me. Then someday, if all went well, I'd forget the ways I was broken.

—Jim Ruland





SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADDY TIGHT PANTS

**"Finally, a food that satisfies hunger!"**

# Beef Protein, White Wires, and the Shame of Punk Patches!

Attention Razorcake readers who do not plan to kill themselves in the three to four weeks allotted between the release of this issue and the New Year! I write this column in the hope that I can still reach you before you have chosen your New Year's resolutions!

I'm assuming that you have already considered several possibilities: giving up coffee (stupid), training for a marathon (impossible), finishing your zine (See: previous year's resolution), and abstaining from listening to Less Than Jake's *Pezcore* despite feelings of nostalgia for a time when your musical tastes were, well, worse—although, truth be told, you were already embarrassed to be listening to it, to say nothing of liking it, approximately two months after it was released.

Fear not! There is another option—one that avoids the trappings of ska punk, the handwritten recounting of a recent break-up, and the dangers of a caffeine-free, exercise-based lifestyle!

Warning: this resolution requires an unwavering commitment (otherwise known as commitment) to one food item! And no, the food item in question is not Marshmallow Fluff (which my college boyfriend once challenged himself to subsist on solely, and succeeded for about a week, if memory serves)!

For the next year, you must vow to follow a diet developed by a doctor who feels the need to wear a white coat AND stethoscope in all photos. Yes, it's Dr. Siegal's cookie diet!

Allow me to explain. About a year ago, my boyfriend and I were wandering the aisles of Walgreens aimlessly, when we noticed a curious product, placed on the top shelf of the "diet/diabetes" section, above weight loss pills, Ensure, glucose monitors, and other essential items. Normally, this would not be an aisle that would attract much attention from either of us, given that it lacks both candy and toilet paper—the most common motives for a trip to any twenty-four-hour retailer.

But there was something about this product that demanded further scrutiny. Perhaps it was the half-smile of the white-coat-clad Dr. Siegal, or the words "Chocolate Diet Cookies," or the curious prominence given to the phrase "Naturally and artificially flavored."

Dave reached up to grab it, causing a cloud of dust to rain down on Dr. Siegal's competitors' offerings. His blackened hands held a paper box (about the size of two shoe boxes), which we learned contained a one-week supply of diet cookies (forty two cookies total). The product was designed to solve a common problem—how to avoid letting the need for food get in the way of your efforts to eat nothing, or, as the box put it, "Don't let hunger wreck your diet!"

The back of the box offered a detailed explanation. "Eat six Dr. Siegal's Cookie Diet cookies during the day to satisfy hunger. Eat one cookie and a glass of water and wait fifteen minutes. If still hungry, eat a second. You shouldn't need a third."

Finally, a food that satisfies hunger! The instructions went on to say that "in addition to the six cookies (which provide approximately five hundred calories), eat a dinner of five hundred to seven hundred calories."

Of course, we were still skeptical. Wouldn't these cookies taste disgusting? Thankfully, the instructions assured us, "For best flavor, this product is not fortified with vitamins or minerals."

Finally a product untainted by nutrients! If only this could be done to all foods. Imagine how much better oranges would taste if all of the foul-smelling vitamin C could be extracted! Imagine a reconfigured version of Lucky Charms that managed to strip away any trace nutrients that could be located! Increased tastiness is go!

The box also noted, "This product is a food that contains no drugs." And the ingredient list proved challenging to any mid-level spelling bee prodigy. There's microcrystalline cellulose, thiamine mononitrate, and sodium acid pyrophosphate! But the first three ingredients are more pronounceable. First ingredient? Glycerin, which, the internet tells me, is either animal fat or vegetable oil, depending on the whims of the manufacturer. Next up? Whole wheat flour. Disturbingly familiar. Thankfully, the third ingredient got things back on track. Beef protein hydrolysate!

Information alert: According to a random bodybuilding website, beef protein hydrolysate is made "by taking USDA grade

beef (and) heating it up to hydrolyze the protein... It is then filtered to take out the cholesterol and the fat. Next, all the water is evaporated and the concentrated protein left over is close to ninety-nine percent pure. Then it is dried, leaving powdered beef protein isolate."

The end result? "The hydrolyzing process breaks protein down into predigested fragments."

Finally, a predigested source of beef! Truly, we are living in historic times!

Sadly, this diet was not cheap. \$59.99 got you a one-week's supply. Math alert: That's \$239.96 for a four-week's supply. We returned the package to the shelf, our opportunity to test a disgustingly revolutionary food item denied.

Months passed. We sought consolation in the internet, where we learned that more than 500,000 people have used Dr. Siegal's cookie diet since it was first introduced in 1975. "Half a million?" you exclaim, loudly and awkwardly, on the bus while you're reading this. "That's insane!!"

Sadly, math-impaired reader, that works out to a mere 13,889 people each year. Given that this product worked its way into the inventory of a Midwestern Walgreens, surely the cookie factory churns out hundreds of thousands of boxes each year. And, judging by the nutritional information, the average life span of someone following this diet would be roughly four months. That leaves a seriously untasty abundance of predigested beef!

The company's website includes a history section with photos of a young Dr. Siegal posing with a microscope and holding a gigantic syringe—a reassuring combination, to be sure.

This is also where I stumbled across a disturbing allegation: "To this day, Dr. Siegal mixes every batch of his secret amino acid protein blend with his own hands in his private bakery."

But Dr. Siegal can't live forever, and it appears that he's grooming his son, Matthew Siegal, to take over the hand blending of amino acids.

As with any transfer of power, this succession is likely to create anxiety amongst



cookie dieters. And, unfortunately for this upstanding doctor, an internet search reveals that his successor recently appeared on the reality show, "Millionaire Matchmaker," in which he requested to be set up with men at least twenty years his junior, leading the matchmaker to label him as "gaygist."

Even worse, his pre-arranged date ended with his boyfriend-to-be throwing a drink in his face. And worse yet, the middle-aged Siegal deserved it. The matchmaker's parting words? "You don't deserve love... You're going to dry up as a little old crone in a nursing home." Ouch.

So, perhaps it's no surprise that a few months later, my boyfriend and I found the very same boxes of Dr. Siegal's diet cookies moved to the bottom shelf, where they had been marked down to an affordable \$15.99!

Needless to say, this is well within my ridiculous purchase budget. We wiped off the dust and headed to the cash register, where the cashier expressed surprise at our purchase. We are creatures of habit, and therefore know that this cashier has worked at Walgreens for, at minimum, five years, and, at maximum, his entire life. "Have you ever sold a box of this?" we asked. "Nope."

Excellent! A rare food item, rejected by mainstream America! Punk rock!

But one task remained—eating the cookies. This proved difficult. Although I'm not a vegetarian, I had never considered eating meat cookies before. The box came with seven individual cookie pouches. (For calendar novices, that adds up to one a day for one week.) The cookies were dark brown with white spots that appeared to be some sort of "crisp" item. The smell was mildly stomach churning.

The taste was decidedly un-cookie-like. More of a dense, chewy bread, with a hint of stale chocolate.

In other words, it was the perfect diet cookie. The box's instructions proved accurate! "You shouldn't need a third." In fact, you might not even need a second! And, better yet for aspiring dieters, you might not even need to finish the first one!

Better yet, the box even came with a "free sample" bottle containing seven tablets of Dr. Siegal's "premium multivitamin and minerals."

Dear readers, if you commit to subsisting on a diet of Dr. Siegal's cookies and a "dinner of 500 to 700 calories," I guarantee that you will lose half of your body weight by March. Imagine how svelte you'll look at the next Awesome Fest! Not a single member of Tiltwheel will recognize you!

And so, I urge you to travel, forthwith, to your local Walgreens to secure your own supply of this wonder product! But act quickly—especially if you live in the densely punk populated cities of Chattanooga, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis! Given the influential nature of tight-panted Razorcake columnists, it's likely that within days, nay, hours, the shelves will be bare and you'll have to spend the rest of the year enviously watching your friends shrink down to nothingness!

"You're stupid," you remark, meanly. "Even if that happened, how could it possibly affect my life?"

Stupid reader, how dumb you are. When the average weight of the collective punk community drops to the double digits, there will be an abrupt realignment of the band T-shirt sizing system. A medium will fit a fifty-pounder. A large will fit a sixty-five-pounder. As for extra large? I guess it might fit a morbidly obese White Wires fan who tips the scales at around eighty-five pounds. And that's a best case scenario.

But that's not all. Clearly, despite the sizing issues, you're still going to need to comply with the mandatory punk rock identification policy. While your friend is wearing the latest glow-in-the-dark Shannon And The Clams shirt, you'll be forced to turn that same shirt into a patch that you will then sew onto your gigantic lame white T-shirt. Mockery will ensue, and in no time at all, you'll be breaking into punk houses in the middle of the morning (prime punk sleeping time) to get your fat hands on a stash of diet cookies! A truly shameful lifestyle!

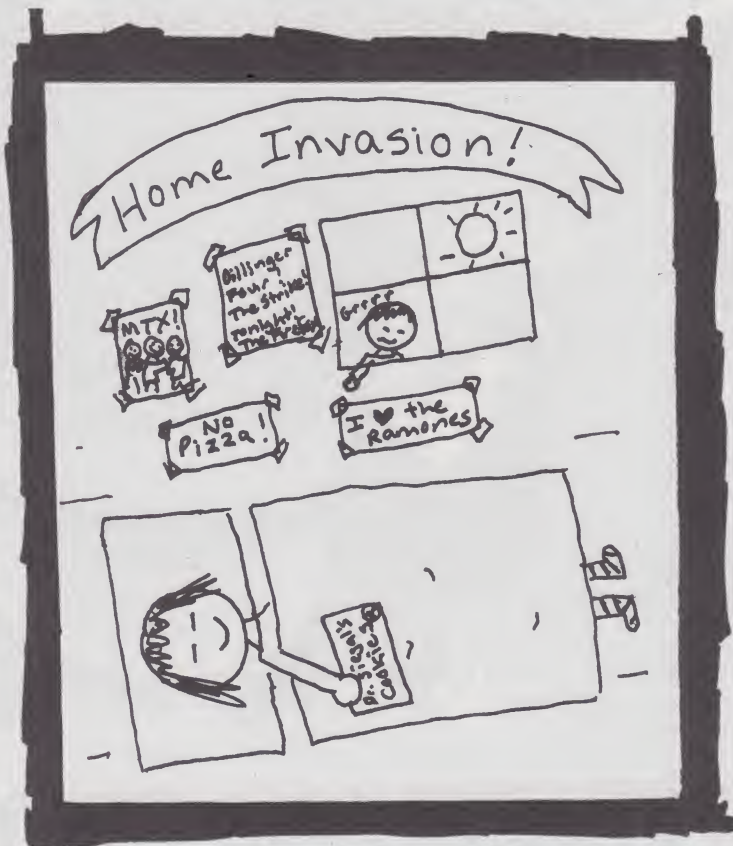
And so, without further ado, go forth and purchase!

Punk rockily,

—Maddy

P.S. It's Razorcake's tenth anniversary!

# A rare food item, rejected by mainstream America! Punk rock!





CONGRATULATIONS  
ON BEING THE BEST  
ZINE IN THE SCENE  
FOR 10 YEARS,  
RAZORCAKE!

IT'S ALIVE  
RECORDS



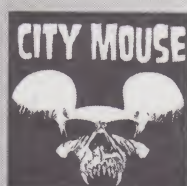
PLUMMETING INTO DEBT SINCE 2004!



THE MANIX  
"Neighborhood Wildlife" LP



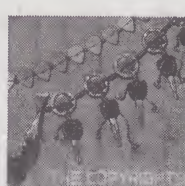
WEEKEND DADS  
"Weekend Dads" 7"



CITY MOUSE  
"City Mouse" 7"



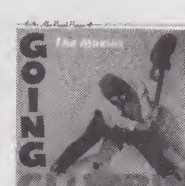
THE MAXIES  
"Greenland Is Melting" CD/LP



THE COPYRIGHTS  
"North Sentinel Island" LP



THE COPYRIGHTS  
"Crutches" 7"



THE MAXIES  
"Going Clubbin" 7"



MALL'D TO DEATH  
"... Reaching Out" 7"



CRUSADES  
"The Sun Is Down ..." CD/LP



THE CREEPS  
"Lakeside Cabin" LP



THE CREDENTIALS  
"Goocher" LP



DAN PADILLA  
"As The Ox Plows" CD/LP



GATEWAY DISTRICT  
"Perfect's Gonna Fail" CD/LP



CHINESE TELEPHONES  
"Democracy" LP



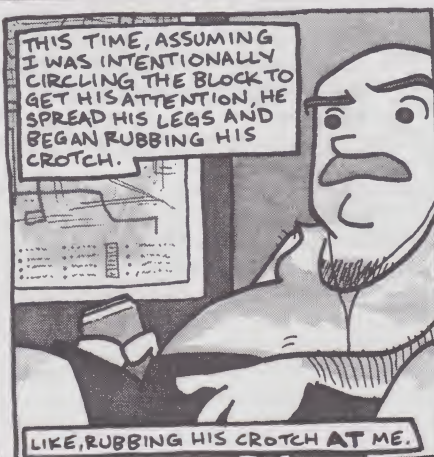
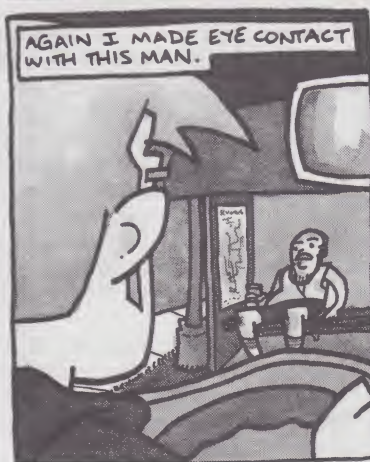
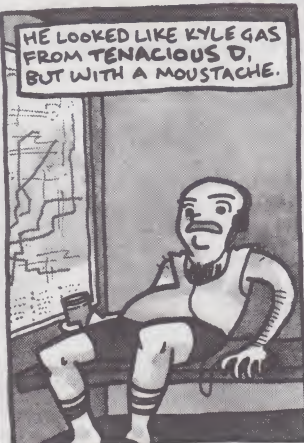
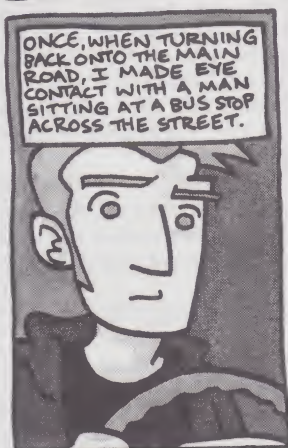
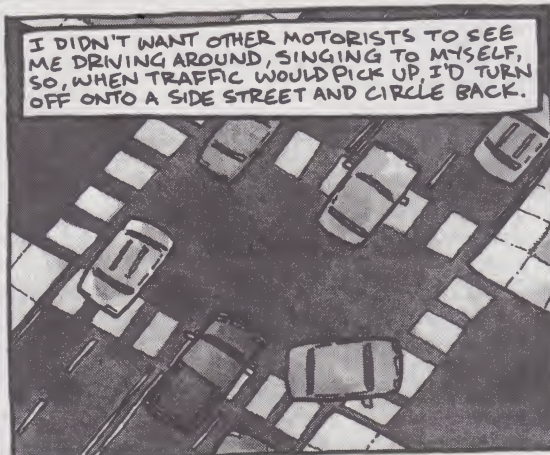
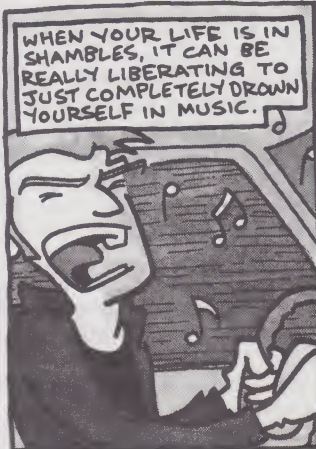
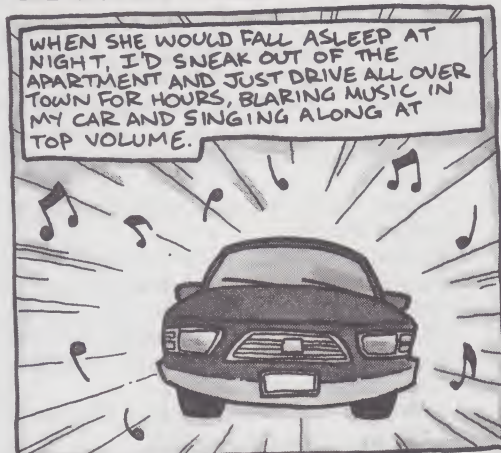
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# MY STUPID LIFE

BY MITCH CLEM  
WATERCOLORS BY NATION OF AMANDA





DOOT  
DOOLA  
DOOT  
DOO...

DOOT  
DOO!

## WHO ARE YOU?

**"My favorite character in *The Fountainhead*?"**

# Nardwuar vs. Geddy Lee

## The Human Serviette of Rush

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Geddy Lee:** [pause] I beg your pardon?

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Geddy:** Who are you?

**Nardwuar:** I am Nardwuar the Human Serviette, and you are?

**Geddy:** You are the Human Serviette?

**Nardwuar:** Nardwuar the Human Serviette.

**Geddy:** Well, that's rather gross. What does that mean?

**Nardwuar:** Just like, you know, napkin—you know, wiping things up with it. But you are? Most importantly, you are....

**Geddy:** I am a guy.

**Nardwuar:** You are Geddy Lee!

**Geddy:** Yes.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy, you are God! I must say that! You are God! You are Geddy Lee! You are God!

**Geddy:** Well, that's an unusual way to describe me.

**Nardwuar:** So Geddy, at one time did Rush open for the New York Dolls at the old New Yorker Theatre in Toronto?

**Geddy:** Uh, we opened for the New York Dolls at the Victory Burlesque Theatre in Toronto.

**Nardwuar:** How "glam" were you back then?

**Geddy:** How "glam"?

**Nardwuar:** Yeah, how "glam" were you back...

**Geddy:** I think we were going through a transition of being slightly "glam" in a bar band sense—because at that stage we were pretty much a bar band—and, uh, the transition from that to kind of a more rock band.

**Nardwuar:** Because you were very effeminate at that time. I had this wall towel of you guys where you were all wearing silk kimonos!

**Geddy:** Yeah, we used to. We used to wear silks and satins and ridiculous platform shoes and sequined tops and things like that.

**Nardwuar:** Was there any particular shampoo that you used at all, Geddy?

**Geddy:** Well, that's a rather dumb question.

**Nardwuar:** Well, I was just curious—to bring out that special Rush look in the early days.

**Geddy:** Yeah. Well, I can see this interview is going into a very boring direction for me.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy, how come you guys never did do a full-on punk album? A lot of my friends were wondering that, because that would have been wicked! A Rush punk album!

**Geddy:** It's because we weren't a punk band.

**Nardwuar:** But you had some punk-associated type things with you. For example,

didn't Gerald Casale from Devo do some of your videos?

**Geddy:** Yeah, but he wasn't punk.

**Nardwuar:** And you wore a Devo pin as well!

**Geddy:** Yeah, but they weren't punk.

**Nardwuar:** But you had that kind of feel though. Like, you wore skinny ties. And you seemed to be kind of inspired by new wave. Like, were you into Gary Numan?

**Geddy:** No.

**Nardwuar:** What about "Digital Man" and "Spirit of the Radio" having reggae parts? Would you say there was any punk feel there at all? Why didn't you...

**Geddy:** I don't know why you associate reggae style with punk.

**Nardwuar:** It was the whole new wave...

**Geddy:** It's a completely different genre of music.

**Nardwuar:** Well, a lot of the punk bands use that. Like, the Clash did reggae. Even D.O.A. from Vancouver broke into some reggae as well. I just kind of saw some of that Police influence in those songs.

**Geddy:** Yeah, well, the Police were a pop band, not a punk band.

**Nardwuar:** So do you take offense to the word "punk" then, Geddy?

**Geddy:** No, I don't take offense to the word at all. There were some punk bands that I liked, but I don't see how you can associate them with our music.

**Nardwuar:** Well, I just see that you guys had that punk feel because you had the Melvins open for you guys. Do you think the Melvins were the best band ever to open for Rush, Geddy?

**Geddy:** Uh, no. I think—Melvins were a pretty interesting band. Unfortunately, they really didn't fare very well in front of our audience.

**Nardwuar:** What happened?

**Geddy:** Well, they weren't very well thought of. [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** Geddy, do you feel guilty at all about the thousands of teenage boys who ended up with blisters on their thumbs trying to be a cool rock bassist like yourself?

**Geddy:** [laughs] No. Yeah. I feel real guilty about it.

**Nardwuar:** Your voice really is truly amazing. However, Geddy, *Rolling Stone Record Guide* seems to think that you have "a voice like Donald Duck." What the hell is their problem?

**Geddy:** I don't know. You will have to ask them.

**Nardwuar:** And speaking of your voice, have you heard the Pavement song, "Stereo," off the *Brighten the Corners* album that has the lyrics, "What about the voice of Geddy Lee? How did it get so high? I wonder if he speaks like an ordinary guy. I know him, and he does!"

**Geddy:** Right. I've heard about it. I haven't heard it myself.

**Nardwuar:** What do you do when you hear a song like that? Do you feel proud that you've installed these young punkers—again, going back to the punk allusion, Geddy—with the feel of Rush? What do you feel when you hear a song like that?

**Geddy:** I think it's amusing. I think in a weird way it is complimentary.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy, the Canadian content on the Rush resume is amazing! You are the man! Like I said, you are God! You are Geddy Lee! You sang "Take Off Eh (to) the Great White North!" with Bob and Doug McKenzie from SCTV! That's great to have that on your resume!

**Geddy:** Well, it's amusing.

**Nardwuar:** It's excellent! And you also had Count Floyd from SCTV introduce the tune "The Red Barchetta" at one of your concerts! Like didn't that happen?

**Geddy:** Yeah, the song was "The Weapon" I believe.

**Nardwuar:** On a big video screen!

**Geddy:** Yeah. He did a couple of intros for us.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy Lee of Rush, what was it like being present for the recordings of the greatest Canadian record of all time?

**Geddy:** What was that?

**Nardwuar:** *Tears Are Not Enough!* Artists for Africa!

**Geddy:** [laughs] Well! It was interesting. It was fairly comical to watch all these people being, one by one, brought to the mic and ordered around by David Foster. At the same time, it was a lot of fun to meet people like Neil Young and Joni Mitchell, who are artists that I have had a lot of respect for for many years, but I would say it was a very odd pairing of human beings.

**Nardwuar:** Well, just how annoying was David "Blow Dry" Foster in the studio on that fateful day in March, 1985, Geddy Lee?

**Geddy:** Well, I remember him asking Joni Mitchell to sing her line over and over again, and, to everyone standing around, every performance was wonderful, and yet he





LUBRANO

**"I think the Melvins were a pretty interesting band. Unfortunately, they really didn't fare very well in front of our audience."**

insisted on making her sing it over and over again—to most people's amazement. And then when Neil Young came in, he sang it once, and David Foster asked him to sing it again because it was a little out of tune. Neil replied to him that that's his style and he's not going to do it again, to which a great swelling of pride welled up in all the onlookers!

**Nardwuar:** Speaking of the studio, I was shattered to learn from producer Terry Brown when he revealed that "Tom Sawyer" is comprised of three drum takes!? Three different drum takes for "Tom Sawyer!" Say it isn't so, Geddy!

**Geddy:** Uh, I don't remember that, to be honest.

**Nardwuar:** So...

**Geddy:** But in those days, you were recording everything analog and you are also playing as a band, so when you record it, it wasn't just drums playing by themselves. It was bass, drums, guitar playing the bed tracks together. So the only technology available was to cut between different takes, which was quite normal in those days.

**Nardwuar:** So does that mean there's edits in "Tom Sawyer," Geddy Lee?

**Geddy:** There very well could be.

**Nardwuar:** Is there any truth to the rumor of Rush roadies accepting Ayn Rand books as bribes to get backstage to meet you guys?

**Geddy:** [laughs] I don't think so!

**Nardwuar:** And, Geddy, do you really believe all that Ayn Rand shit? I mean, come on, do you believe all that or is it Neil's thing?

**Geddy:** Ayn Rand was someone who was very influential on Neil and myself—I would say almost twenty years ago—and, yes, I think she had a lot to offer in terms of her theories on her artistic manifesto and her beliefs in individualism. At some point in my life, she was a formative influence, but one of many, I would say.

**Nardwuar:** Who is your favorite character in *The Fountainhead*, Geddy Lee?

**Geddy:** My favorite character in *The Fountainhead*?

**Nardwuar:** Which one do you think...

**Geddy:** [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** Which character do you think parallels your life the best in *The Fountainhead*?

**Geddy:** None of them.

**Nardwuar:** And, Geddy Lee, are you guys still into the drugs? Like, in high school, Rush was *the* band to smoke dope to! And songs like "Passage to Bangkok" only made us want to get higher and higher!

**Geddy:** Yeah, well, I don't smoke dope.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy, what to you is real prog rock? You know, ELP (Emerson, Lake & Palmer), Yes, Amon Düül II, Can, Gentle Giant? What to you is real prog rock?

**Geddy:** Well, prog rock, I'm afraid, is

a dying or an outdated form of music. Nobody's really carrying the tradition on, but in its day, Van Der Graaf Generator and, at times, Genesis and Yes—those bands were interesting to me.

**Nardwuar:** And, Geddy Lee, if you were a dog, what breed would you be?

**Geddy:** Next question.

**Nardwuar:** Anything else you would like to add at all to the people out there, Geddy Lee?

**Geddy:** Mmm. No, thank you.

**Nardwuar:** Why should people care about Rush?

**Lee:** I haven't got the foggiest idea.

**Nardwuar:** Well, thanks for your time, Geddy. Keep on rockin' in the free world. And, doot doola doot doo...

**Geddy:** Okay.

**Nardwuar:** Geddy Lee, doot doola doot doo...

**Geddy:** Good bye!

**Nardwuar:** No, Geddy Lee, doot doola doot doo...

**Geddy:** See ya!

**Nardwuar:** No, Geddy Lee. Please? Doot doola doot doo...

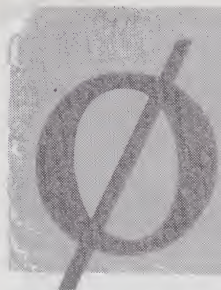
**Geddy:** See ya.

**Nardwuar:** Please, Geddy... Doot doola doot doo...

**Geddy:** [Dial tone. Geddy hangs up.]

To hear this interview, hop to nardwuar.com





POWER POP POLICE

REV. NØRB

"My  
Permanent  
Record®"

# REV. NØRB: C.O.D.

I got fired last month, in the middle of making a D.O.A. flyer. More to the point, i got fired last month, FROM THE COMPANY I HELPED START, FROM THE COMPANY WHICH GOT ITS ORIGINAL FUNDING BY USING ONE OF MY IDEAS, FROM THE COMPANY FOR WHICH I ROUTINELY WORKED SIXTY OR SEVENTY HOUR WEEKS in the middle of making a D.O.A. flyer. *Who the fuck fires a guy in the middle of making a D.O.A. flyer???* In what barn were these fuckheads raised???

*What? You're firing me? Why, because the company lost money for the last five years straight or something? Hey, they all want ice water in Hell too, pal! Maybe you shoulda bought me more plane tickets to L.A. so i could do more Razorcake podcasts on the company dime, did you budding geniuses ever think of THAT? Now shut the fuck up; i'm making a D.O.A. flyer—AN ACTIVITY OF ACTUAL VALUE—and come get me in another ten or fifteen minutes. You can fire me then. I'm also stealing an SD card reader, so wait til I get that in my pocket before you come back. Thanks. So, yeah. Sacked. Shitcanned. "86ed (Gone For Good)," as the second Circle Jerks album said. My last known act as an employee was to type "TRUE NØRB STRONG AND FREE" on the side of a not-quite-finished D.O.A. flyer, and hit "print." Eh. Fuck it. Life is stupid. You go from being the guy in the song "Clocked In" by Black Flag to being the guy in the song "God Damn Job" by the Replacements, and back and forth again. Eventually you wind up being the guy in the song "I'm Dead" by The Stain, and you don't have to worry about it anymore ((but, now that i think about it, "God Damn Job" is a far superior song to "Clocked In," so what the fuck's my beef?)). Anyway, i want this known. I want this on My Permanent Record®, A Record That Will Follow Me All Throughout My Life: I GOT FIRED IN THE MIDDLE OF MAKING A D.O.A. FLYER. I want this to be a marketing bullet point on the back of the box of the video game of my life! When i walk down the street, i want people who look like 1950's clip art to point their thumbs at me and say "Look! There's the fellow who got fired making a D.O.A. flyer!" and "Gosh!" and similar effusions of shock and awe! I want this to be woven into the rich tapestry of the Rev. Nørb Mystique®*

as integrally as the fact that i once waited for an elevator with Bret Michaels of Poison, or that my cousin and i think we once met Al Hrabosky, the Mad Hungarian! I GOT FIRED IN THE MIDDLE OF MAKING A D.O.A. FLYER!!! CAN YOUR SHAMPOO DO THIS??? Now, to be clear, i don't blame my clandestine flyer-making operation for my recent trip to the dole ((I'M ON THE DOLE! I'M ON THE DOLE! BOB DOLE DOESN'T NEED THIS!!!)). I don't blame the economy, poor contracts, video game publishers who screwed us over, or the fact that we apparently lost three-quarters of a million dollars over the course of the last half-decade ((i told them "Ramones side-scrroller!", but would anyone listen to me? No!!!)). The culprit, pure and simple, is THE CURSE O' D.O.A. The Curse O' D.O.A.—or "C.O.D." for short—is a very real thing. It has, over the course of the last three decades, routinely and predictably fucked up just about every D.O.A.-related facet of my existence. And, the sad thing—even sadder than me having to finish my flyer with a fucking ballpoint pen because some asshole made me go clean out my desk—is that I BROUGHT THE CURSE OF D.O.A. UPON MYSELF. At some point during Winter '80-'81, me and my late great buddy Perry—both of us high school sophomores—were downtown at the record store after school, as was not uncommon. Being a punk rocker going to the record store with your pals back then was substantially different thirty years ago than it is today ((at least where we lived)): Today, record stores have a whole fucking AISLE labeled "INDIE" or "PUNK" or what-have-you. You walk into a record store now, and if your buddy starts looking through the "A" section, you can take the "B" section—there are plenty of records to go around. Thirty years ago, most stores had ONE little bin of vinyl labeled "PUNK," filled with a stack of records maybe eight inches deep. If you were lucky, there was an adjacent bin of similar size labeled "IMPORT." The term "indie" did not yet exist ((Yeah! Go 1980!)); what independent records there were usually got chucked into the IMPORT bin, because they were handled by the same distributors who handled the imports and nobody really knew what else to do with them. If you went to the record store with your friends, you were all clustered

around one shitty little shelf of records, elbowing each other out of the way, grabbing this and that out of the stack in the hopes that you were the first to get your hands on something new and cool. Perry and I were pretty competitive, as far as records went, so when we went record shopping, it was an all-out war to be the first to find and grab the new cool shit. On this fateful day, i had gotten pole position at Freedom Records® and was first to grab the store's only copy of D.O.A.'s "Something Better Change" LP. I scrutinized the album cover, looking for clues as to what the fuck they were all about. Perry scrutinized along from over my shoulder. I thought they seemed weird, like artsy bikers or something. The album cover was just a band photo—no band name, no album title, no text whatsoever ((those two details were supplied by a sticker on the shrink wrap)). Arty! I didn't know what to make of the band photo, either: Chuck Biscuits looked like a retard, Joey Shithead looked like a biker, and Randy Rampage was posing dolefully in a long black trenchcoat whilst the rest of his bandmates were in short sleeves. The back cover was adorned with lyrical snippets, which, i assumed, were the song lyrics in their entirety. Having performed my due diligence, i concluded that D.O.A. were arty, retarded bikers, performing songs with only one or two lines of lyrics, probably repeated ad infinitum whilst they just made arty, bikery noise. I passed, returning the record to the bin and relinquishing my claim thereon. Perry grabbed it immediately. An hour later, Perry called me to inform me that i was "the biggest dum-dum known to man" ((Perry had a certain way with words)): D.O.A. were pretty much—oh, i don't know—THE BEST BAND EVER or something. Perry yelled "LISTEN!" and held the receiver up to his bedroom stereo, which was blasting out "New Age." **EV'RYBODY'S GONNA SCREAAAAAM AND SHOUTTTTTT!!!** Fucking amazing. Perry continued gloating, playing me "Get Out Of My Life" in its entirety, knowing full well that he was crushing me utterly. This, then, is my greatest Punk Rock Shame: *I am the guy who passed on being the first guy in Green Bay to own the first D.O.A. album, and had to listen to it over the phone. I HAVE BEEN CURSED EVER SINCE. I'm not kidding: EVERY FUCKING TIME I TRY TO GO SEE D.O.A.,*





BILL PINKEL

Having performed my due diligence, i concluded that D.O.A. were arty, retarded bikers, performing songs with only one or two lines of lyrics.

*SOMETHING GOES TO HELL.* D.O.A. were playing with M.D.C. in Milwaukee in 1982. My friend Jim ((who grew up to be first the singer of NO RESPONSE, then the BLACK KEYS tour manager)) and i were jumping up and down with elation—*OH BOY! D.O.A. IN MILWAUKEE! CAN'T WAIT!*—until we realized that the D.O.A. show was the same night as Homecoming, an event for which we already had dates ((she's married now or engaged or something, so i am told)). *CURSE O' D.O.A.!* A few years later, D.O.A. play in Green Bay, at some place at the outskirts of town called the Danceland Ballroom. I figure i can get there after work on my tiny little '81 Honda® Passport™ scooter. The Passport™ doesn't go much faster than 42-43 mph, and i need to take it out at night on a busy, 55 mph two-lane highway, but i figure no sacrifice is too onerous to see the great D.O.A., thus i'm driving this cockamamie little 70cc thing down Highway 29 out in the country, cars are backed up behind me, it's awful. I try to keep

to the right as much as possible but the road has got a gravel shoulder. The flyer directions are fucked. I wind up lost, one county over. PUTT. SPUTTER. COUGH. I run out of gas. I don't make the show. *CURSE O' D.O.A.!!!* A few years later, i buy the "True (North), Strong and Free" album, and am so fired up that i drink myself nuts listening to "Nazi Training Camp" and "Takin' Care of Business" over and over again. I decide it would be a great idea to hop on my buddy's wife's Honda® Aero™ 80 scooter and take it for a drunken race through his neighborhood. Apparently the Aero's extra 10cc's of pure groinal POWER prove too much for me to handle, as i hit a curb at top speed, smashing her scooter and my face in front of a few horrified families. I spend the afternoon in the emergency room. *THE C.O.D.!!!* I finally get a chance to see D.O.A. in the flesh in 1999. Their drummer's back goes out on him after two songs. They get the guy from Zeke to fill in, and spend most of the night playing reggae jams. I spend most of the night

wishing i was listening to "Something Better Change" over the phone. *THE C.O.D.!!!* Fast-forward to last month: I am making a flyer for the show where i can finally fulfill my life's ambition of seeing D.O.A., WHOLE AND INTACT, not playing reggae jams, not lost in the woods somewhere running out of gas, not strapped down to a table in the emergency room—and i get fired in the middle of it. *C-O-fucking-D, dude!* Well, okay, sure—losing your job sucks ((kinda)). But, if nothing else, at least i won't have to worry about being stuck in the office the night of Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, and missing the show. *Fast forward a few more weeks.* I pick up a part-time teaching job on Thursday nights. I start on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. Somewhere, Perry is holding the phone up to his stereo speaker and laughing his ass off at me.

Love,  
—Norb



I Don't want to grow up

y'know that feeling when you were in highschool and some asshole said this to you:



and it bothered you so much you went goth



LIZ PRINCE 2011

except that you really liked ska



and developed a crush on the drummer in an emo band



then kind of got into hardcore for a second



but you always had the most fun when singing-a-long to Nerf Herder in Molly B's car



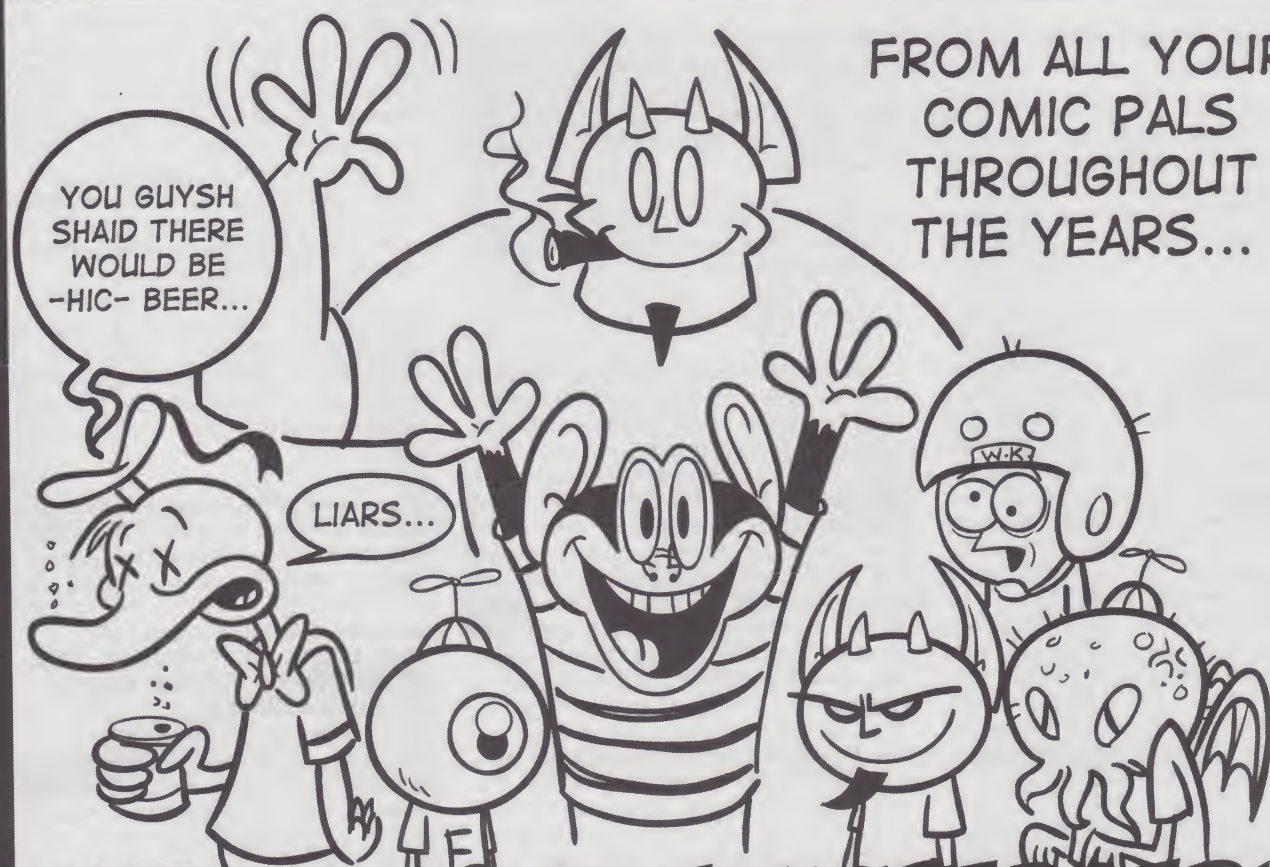
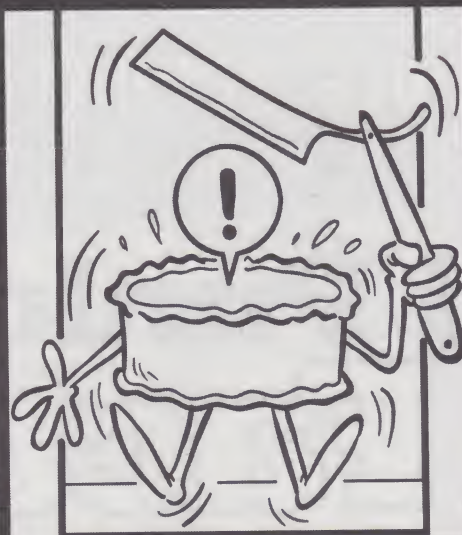
and suddenly you didn't give a damn what anybody thought



so now, 15 years later, that kid who said you weren't punk enough has pictures of himself wearing sandals in the desert like a total hippie on facebook







**HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY,  
RAZORCAKE!!!**





## THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

"The suffering  
is just endless."

# The Old Punk Rock Glue Factory

The Dinghole Reports  
By the Rhythm Chicken  
(commentary by Francis Funyuns)  
[edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

Man-oh-peaches, what a week! Earlier this week I started moving from the Sears Roebuck house to the attic of my soup shop (a drastic reduction in living space, believe me). My back went out on me yet again and the parents had to come up and help me with the rest of the move. The day they show up we get a crazy windstorm up here (seventy mph winds and twenty-three-foot waves on Lake Michigan). Thousands of trees are down all over the county, blocking many roads and crushing many buildings. The power went out for two days. That night we continued packing and moving boxes by candlelight. WORST. MOVE. EVER. I thought this had to be the worst of it. Friday morning I returned to my soup shop, found the electricity out there as well, and had to throw away *everything* in my cooler. Many friends had trees crash into their homes. I was glad that no trees fell onto my soup shop, seeing as how it is now also my new home. I had to close the shop for two days and document everything for the insurance company. My back hurts. My feet hurt. My head hurts.

(Wah, wah, wah! What is this, the Crybaby Reports? Really, Mr. Chicken, we are getting rather sick of hearing your gripes. Have you no punk ruckus to report yet again? - F.F.)

These are truly odd times. Not only am I moving from the Sears Roebuck house into the tiny attic of my soup shop, but Kid Rock is performing *on the streets of Green Bay*! This is such an abomination! What did Green Bay do to deserve *this*? And not long before he tainted Oneida Street, I awoke one morning to learn that Green Bay lost its best greasy spoon diner EVER. Al's Hamburger was an institution. It was the best grimy, greasy spoon I've ever known. It's been there *forever*. Vince Lombardi used to eat

breakfast there most mornings back in the day. There was always a good mix of odd street walkers and working class Joes there, enjoying the cheapest, greasiest breakfast in town. Well, Al's Hamburger had a fire. Green Bay lost another landmark and then Kid Rock is playing on the street. The suffering is just endless.

On top of all this horrendous news, I fear I am dangerously teetering on the verge of becoming (gulp!) un... un... UNPUNK.

[[GASP!!!! - F.F. & Dr. S.]]

I mean, I haven't been to a punk show in years. I haven't gotten any new music in maybe a year. I'm hidden up here in the northwoods, making no attempt to go see any good music at all. I haven't initiated any real ruckus since late January. I'm now in my forties. I keep listening to my favorite music from ten or twenty years ago. I'm feeling more and more like a has-been, a crotchety old complainer with a bad back. Somehow, I am allowed to keep writing in this amazing publication (which is now TEN YEARS OLD!!!) and my only connection to the punk world lately is rocking out to various CDs in my shop, like any other old punk rock schlep. A few weeks ago, I was invited down to Green Bay to see—and possibly play the same bill as D.O.A.—and I opted for a good night's sleep instead. I'm afraid they will soon take me to the old punk rock glue factory. In all actuality, I love the music more than ever, but feel as if I'm not making much of an effort to participate.

(Does this mean you're giving up your column??? Can I take it over??? - F.F.)

[I'm afraid that if this keeps up, your dinghole will surely wither away and mutate into just another belly button! - Dr. S.]

This issue marks the TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY of this fine publication. For ten years I have rolled out the ruckus and reported it to you. I've gone through waves of rampant ruckus along with some lengthy

dry spells, but this is ridiculous. I haven't touched my drums in, oh, ten months. I have, instead, started a business. A *business*. I'm still not sure about the relative punkness of being a business owner, a filthy capitalist. Instead of drinking beer and listening to records, I'm drinking beer and reporting my taxes. Instead of fighting the man, I'm *becoming* the man. The transformation is almost complete! All I gotta do now is hire a staff of well-intentioned punk rock kids and be a shitty boss! I'm that close.

(This really *is* ridiculous, Chickenman! YOU ARE THE RHYTHM CHICKEN! YOU ARE THE EMBODIMENT OF RUCKUS! YOU! ARE! PUNK! ROCK! I cannot sit quietly and let you secede from the punk rock union! - F.F.)

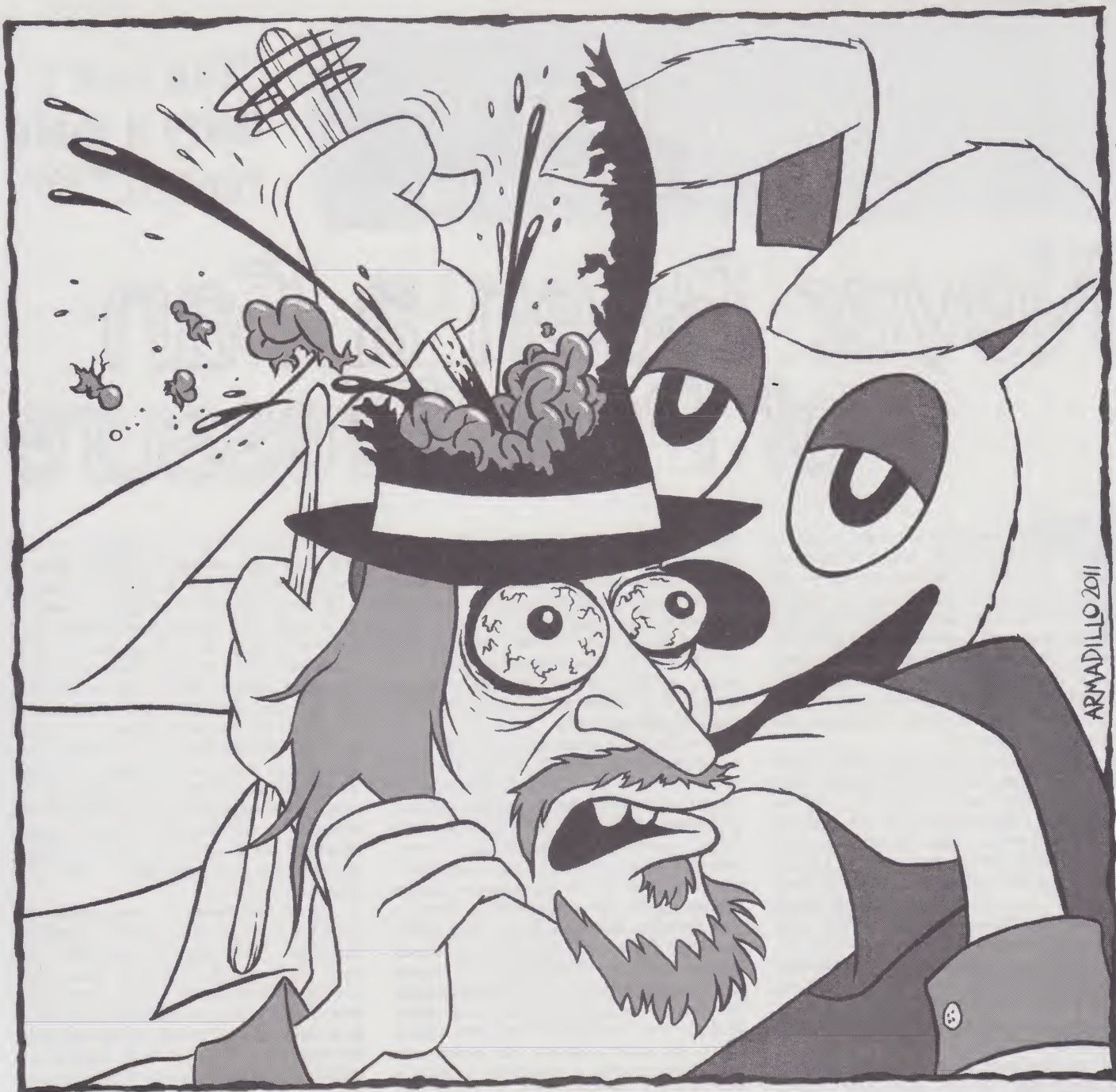
[I'm assuming this means you have no new ruckus to report. Heck, you'll probably try another one of those Nondinghole Reports. The shark is really getting jumped, I tell ya. - Dr. S.]

### Nondinghole Report #2: KID ROCK PERFORMS IN THE STREETS OF GREEN BAY UNCHALLENGED.

(Rhythm Chicken Absence #2)

So, as you all know, the Green Bay Packers are the greatest team to ever play the game, as is evidenced by their Super Bowl victory last winter. Well, I think that someone important might have once said that no blessing is without burden (or maybe I just made that up). The NFL decides to *reward* the city of Green Bay and its fine football team with a free concert. The big Thursday night season-kickoff game ends up being the Saints vs. the Packers at Lambeau Field. They erected a hideously monstrous rock stage out on Oneida Street directly in front of the stadium. Thousands and thousands of sheep-minded Kid Rock fans fill the street and Kid Rock hits the stage. All the fancy hi-tech cameras are on and the tiny northern town of Green Bay is on national television hosting the likes of Kid Rock. We win the *fucking* Super Bowl and all they can give us is THIS??? Couldn't they send him to Pittsburgh?





JASON ARMADILLO

**The transformation is almost complete!**

**All I gotta do now is hire a staff of well-intentioned punk rock kids and be a shitty boss!**

**I'm that close.**

There were thousands of drunk Packer fans roaming around and no Rhythm Chicken. The cameras were zooming this way and that, capturing the lame rock show with Kid Rock and all his screaming fans and there was no Rhythm Chicken. This was an event where shit could've REALLY gotten messed with, and quite easily, might I add, and there was no Rhythm Chicken. Kid Rock could've been assaulted with empty Hamm's cans. He could've been tackled and wrestled to smithereens, and yet there was no

Rhythm Chicken. This was an event where one could really re-affirm one's punkness... and there was no Rhythm Chicken. Where was he? He was one hundred miles north of town, quietly closing up his soup shop while listening to the Clash. Then he drove to his friend Nate's house to watch the Packers on TV, after happily missing the televised Kid Rock show.

(Way to go, Soup Nazi Chicken! You could've been the only one to save Green Bay from

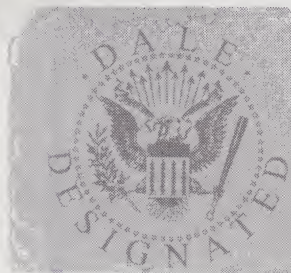
such nationally televised humiliation, and you were hiding up there in your shop like a... like a... LIKE A CHICKEN! - F.F.)

[I motion for a vote of no confidence. - Dr. S.]

I can feel my punkness fading... fading...

-Rhythm Chicken  
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"You can't deny a good record."

# Never Been a Fan of Peer Pressure

Time does indeed fly when you're having fun. It also flies when you're scrambling around at work or school, trying to get the tasks at hand nailed down. As quick as a flash the years jam by. The number of experiences—good and bad—start filling up each of the 365 days in the calendar year. Three hundred sixty-five days seems like quite a bit to push through each year, but stop and think for a minute just how fast these last ten years have gone by.

The last ten years act like they've been ignited in a hot flash of black powder. Truth be told, I really don't feel like I'm forty-one years old. I understand that I've matured (okay, somewhat, where it matters) over the years and have gained a heck of a lot of knowledge and insight along the way, but I don't feel like I'm treading into the waters of my early forties, *especially* when I look around at other people in their early forties.

I tell those younger than me: your twenties last a long, long time (mine did, anyway) and it feels like a never-ending party of fucking off, but once you hit thirty, life kicks into high gear and *boom*, you're off. Perhaps it's the constant laughing or my retarded sense of humor that I've kept intact since I was a little kid, but I know I have a helluva way to go yet, as far as my days here on the big rock are concerned.

I believe all of the music that's entered into my ear canals over the years has a big hand in keeping me young, too. Buying records, going to shows, playing in bands—they all plant a curious bug up your ass that can only be temporarily satiated with getting off on the bands you live for or making music for those who are in the same bug-ridden boat as you are. To a lot of us, music and the people involved *are* life.

Music has always played an important part in my life, ever since I was a little kid, spinning records on my portable turntable in my room and reading old, inherited issues of *MAD* magazine (when *MAD* was still a good read). It's weird to think about how even as a little punk-ass kid, I vividly remember the

tunes buzzing in the background that made hanging out with my family and friends that much more enjoyable. When I think about it now, hanging out in my room was a bit reminiscent of those '50s and early '60s "record parties" you see every now and then on TV, with the black-and-white footage of people mulling over 7" records around a record player while nutty characters wacky dance around the room.

As a little kid who was raised in the '70s, a constant stream of KISS records filled the walls of my room. Through the next ten years (that went by fairly quickly), before I graduated high school in 1988, the portable record player was upgraded to a stereo unit that spun a little of everything across the board with no rhyme or reason behind musical genre or styles: Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Ramones, Black Flag, Cheap Trick, Motörhead, Jimi Hendrix, Dramarama, Rolling Stones, Social Distortion, Agent Orange, Iron Maiden, AC/DC, Adolescents, Psychedelic Furs, The Doors, Circle Jerks, GBH, Slayer, The Beatles, The Clash, Chuck Berry, the older Roth-era Van Halen, and The Replacements. I remember it being a well-blended, oddball batch of bands that connected to one another or that my friends and I simply turned each other onto during my formative years as a music fan.

During high school, the often-asked question was, "Why do you *listen* to that shit?" from people who didn't understand rock'n'roll/metal, or people who thought punk rock was garbage, to which I'd reply, "You can't deny a good record, and this record's the *shit*!" Don't get me wrong; there was a lot from those styles of music that I couldn't stomach (and still can't), but what I liked, I defended fiercely, and for those of you who know me, you know I still do. To me, a great record is a great record. Never being a fan of peer pressure had something to do with it, too, I think.

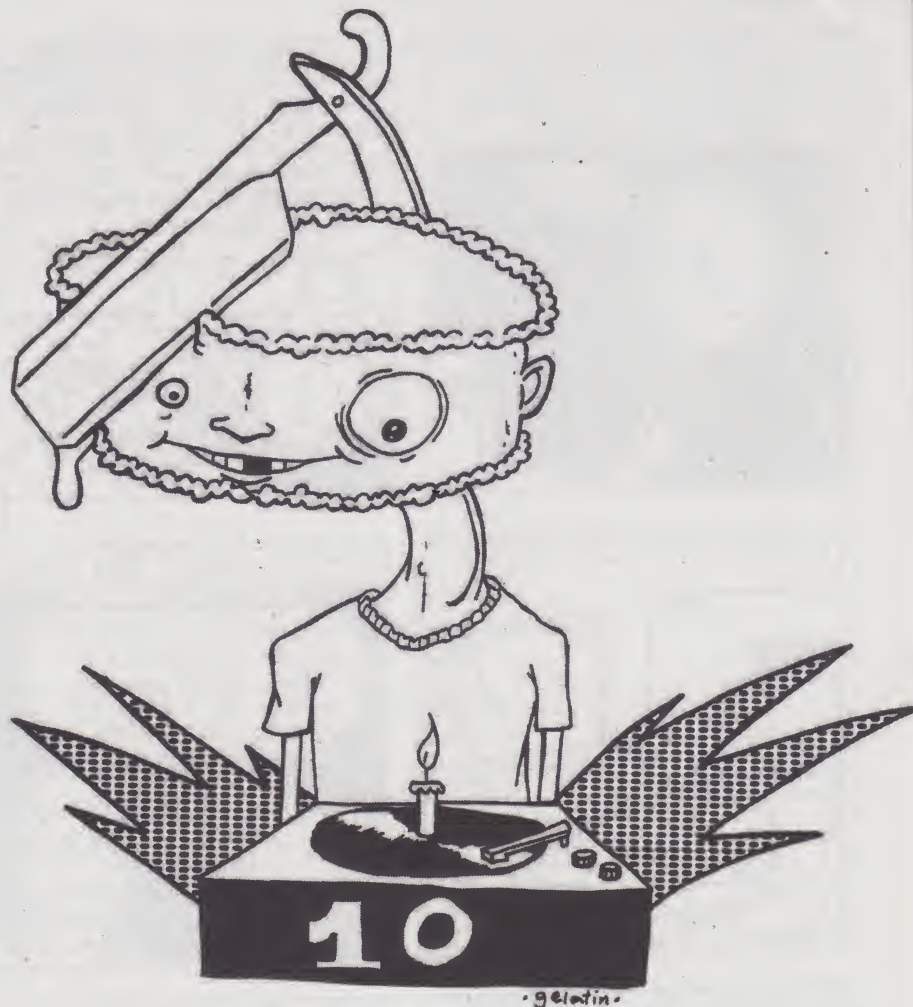
After getting out of high school, I had much more freedom to start seriously playing in bands and going to shows, which

I loved (and still love) immensely. Around this time—that seemingly endless span of being twenty to thirty years old—I learned a lot about the type of people you want to be in bands with and the band members you want absolutely no fucking part of. Like many other types of relationships in my life, I learned quickly which types were down for the cause and the types who wanted nothing more than to be dictators or fucked up on god-knows-what 24/7, or both. These experiences made me appreciate the music of dysfunctional bands who stuck it out for many years that much more. As warped and ridiculously self-centered as these severely dysfunctional families were, they somehow managed to pull off some great records. Mad genius type of stuff.

In my mid-twenties, I was getting fed up with a lot of the horseshit Napoleon complexes from some of the bands I had been playing with. I took a break from playing with others for awhile. Less than a year later, in 1996, I landed the drum stool in a band called Cynical, trying out under the suggestion of my pal Al G. Cynical was definitely one of the greatest experiences I had being in a band—a three-piece outfit founded by guitarist Mark Pananides, who had played with a bunch of bands in the past, including Rat Pack, The Living End (the L.A. band, not that lame Australian act), and Hollywood Hate. I'd known Mark through Al G. from their Living End days, so I knew Mark was all about bringing the rock, and we got along just fine. We also share a rather fucked up sense of humor, love of bad movies, and random jukebox blasts of the past. Having Mr. Clint Weinrich, AKA "The Torrez," and Mark "Dirty" Ho on bass only solidified things that much more (as well as some quality humor and violent shenanigan time). Recording four full-lengths and playing a solid grip of gigs with Cynical all over the place, I learned the nuts and bolts side of tracking songs in a studio and bringing the thunder onstage. We brought it in spades. Before I knew it, it was 2001, I



To a lot  
of us,  
music and  
the people  
involved  
are life.



RYAN GELATIN

had recently turned thirty-one, and Cynical was put on an indefinite hiatus.

That was the same year *Razorcake* made its publishing debut and damned if that doesn't feel like just a couple of years ago. Looking back at the last ten great years with *Razorcake*, so much else has happened so fast that it almost makes my head spin. This is the part I was talking about when you hit thirty. Time starts leaving you in the dust.

This past decade also integrated a lot of good with an equal amount of bad. The Good: Meeting Yvonne, my future wife on August 9th, 2003 and getting married on October 10th, 2009. Playing drums with The Controllers off and on over the years, including the Masque 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show in 2007 alongside a line-up of other first generation punk bands from Los Angeles. Bringing back to life my old high school buddy Bill DuBocq's garage band, 3 Minute Hero, for a good few years and finally getting a proper EP recorded in 2006. Last June saw the formation of Charm Machine, alongside good buddies Mr. Jeff Fox and Herr Art Fuentes, with our newest addition to the band, the finger-shakin', always-entertainin' Tom Vize. November 2010 was also the year that Yvonne and I got to see a lot of Europe.

Here's some bad, namely some of the deaths over the last ten years: Joey Ramone

in 2001. Johnny Heff, the founding frontman and guitarist for the NYC band The Bullys who died when the WTC collapsed on 9/11/01. Heff was a firefighter for the FDNY. My father Richard, Dee Dee Ramone, and Joe Strummer in 2002. Losing one of my best childhood friends, Todd Agajanian, in 2003. Johnny Ramone, Arthur "Killer" Kane, and BOMP! Records founder Greg Shaw in 2004. Richard "Bomer" Manzullo, Derrick Plourde, Stevo, and Randy "Biscuit" Turner in 2005. Jason Sears and Tom "Pig Champion" in 2006. Hilly Kristal (CBGB founder and operator) and Lance Hahn in 2007. Matthew Odietus, Mike Conely, and Frankie Venom in 2008. Lux Interior, Ron Asheton, Sky Saxon, Jim Carroll, and Brendan Mullen (founder of L.A.'s first punk club, The Masque) in 2009. Derf Scratch, Jes The Mess, and Jay Reatard in 2010. And this year (thus far) has claimed Würzel and Poly Styrene.

Even with the good and bad, the music holds strong. That brings us to the magazine you're holding in your hands right this second: *Razorcake* has been consistently published bi-monthly over the past ten years, without fail. That's a heck of a lot of interviews, columns, and reviews to soak in over that amount of time, not to mention the virtual truckloads of podcasts and guest contributor writing that you can click away on over on

our site, [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org). I've had a great and interesting time being involved with this zine as a columnist ever since issue number one. It's been quite a learning experience as a writer, too, thanks to the editorial eyeballs of my good pal Mr. Todd Motherfuckin' Taylor, who got my words-to-paper-chops up and running during our days at *Flipside*.

I've also had the opportunity to do some interviews, as well as record reviews (but nowhere *near* the amount of reviews as my homies Jimmy Alvarado or Donofthedeadd have under their belts!). Two old childhood friends of mine also adorn these newsprint pages of the rock, too: Señor Art Fuentes and Mr. Gary Hornberger, making this experience over the years that much more fun. I've also had the pleasure of making some new friends during the time I've spent with *Razorcake*, including a lot of folks who are constantly hitting the road in bands. Time marches on. Here's to many more years of making new friends and getting your rock on along the way.

I'm Against It,  
—Designated Dale  
[designateddale@yahoo.com](mailto:designateddale@yahoo.com)



MY FORTY-NINTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

ONE DAY THIS PAST SUMMER I STARTED PEEING BLOOD.



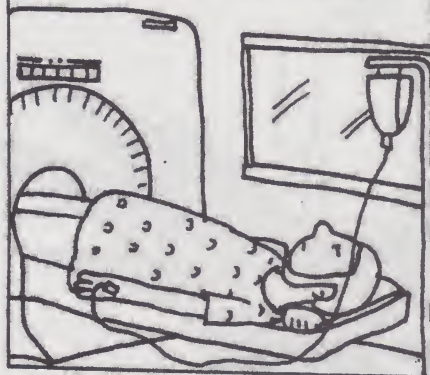
I WENT TO A CLINIC WHERE THEY REFERRED ME TO A UROLOGIST.



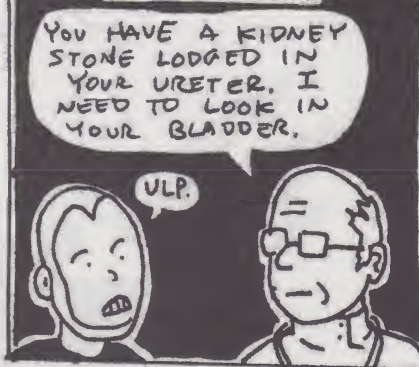
THE UROLOGIST STUCK HIS FINGER IN MY BUTT AND TOLD ME TO GET A CAT SCAN.



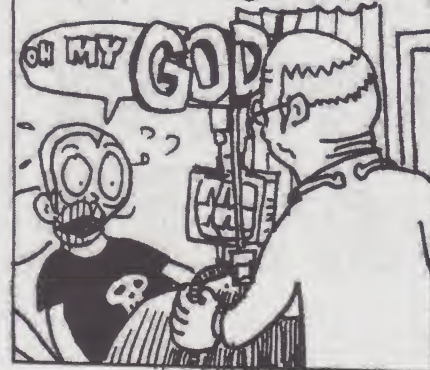
I GOT THE CAT SCAN.



I WENT BACK TO THE UROLOGIST.



HE STUCK A CAMERA INTO MY WEINER.



I WENT TO THE HOSPITAL WHERE THEY PUT ME UNDER AND PULLED THE STONE OUT.



THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE A HAZE OF DRUGS, PAIN, AND PEEING HORRIBLE COLORS.



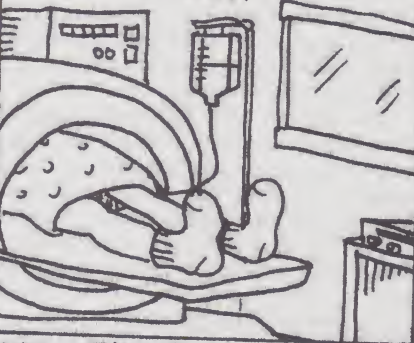
ALSO, THERE WAS A STRING HANGING OUT OF MY DICK.



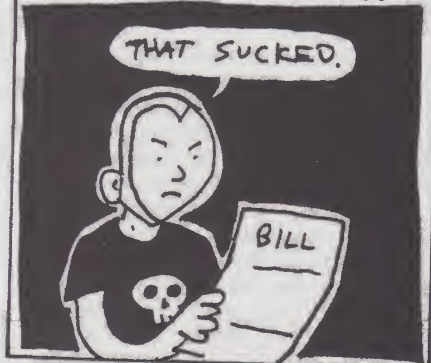
A WEEK LATER THEY PULLED OUT THE STRING (AS WELL AS THE URETERAL STENT THAT WAS ATTACHED TO IT).



THEN I HAD AN M.R.I. TO MAKE SURE THEY GOT IT ALL.



THEY GOT IT ALL. IT WAS REALLY EXPENSIVE.





# WONTON

10 YEARS OLD  
IS TOO YOUNG TO FALL  
IN LOVE



# NOT NOW

BY LUCKY NAKAZAWA

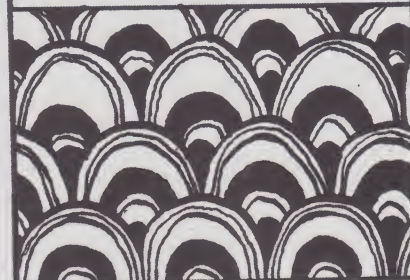
WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD I HAD A TERRIBLE CRUSH ON A GIRL. SHE WAS OLDER THAN ME. A TEENAGER. LET'S CALL HER SUZY.



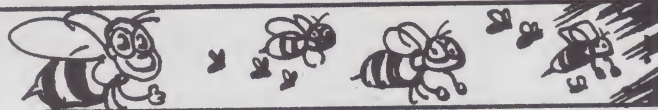
ANY EXCUSE TO BE NEAR HER WAS ALWAYS EXPLOITED. SHE WAS SURPRISINGLY TOLERANT OF ME.



AT TEN YEARS OF AGE A BOY DOES NOT ALWAYS KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY EXPRESS HIMSELF TO A GIRL. WHEN SHE WAS ISOLATED FROM HER PEERS THE CONFUSION MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE FORM OF A JOKE THAT I ASKED SUZY TO LISTEN TO.



OUT OF EMBARRASSMENT I WON'T EVEN BOTHER TELLING YOU THE JOKE. IT WASN'T EVEN A JOKE REALLY.



IT WAS A POINTLESS SOLILOQUY CONCERNING A TREE, BUMBLE BEES AND A VAGINA.

I COULD IMAGINE THAT THIS IS HOW FLASHERS AND OTHER CREEPS GET THEIR START.



NOW MANY MANY DECADES LATER, IN THE 21ST CENTURY, YOU WILL FIND ME MUCH OLDER AND WISER. MY HAIR CUT ISN'T STUPID.



HELLO. I AM OSAMA BIN LADEN. HAPPY 10TH B-DAY TO RAZORLAKE. 2001 TO 2011.

I HOPE I CAN STILL BE IN THESE COMICS.

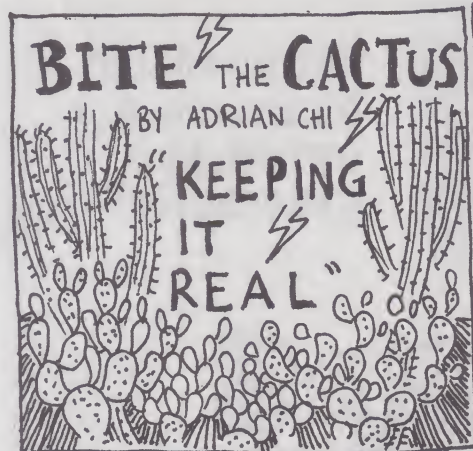






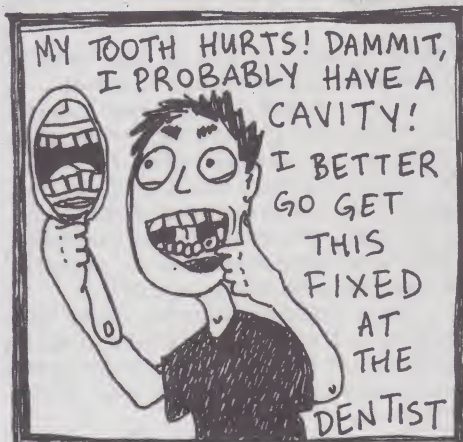
**Dan Monick's Photo Page**  
Red Rocks, CO 08/19/11



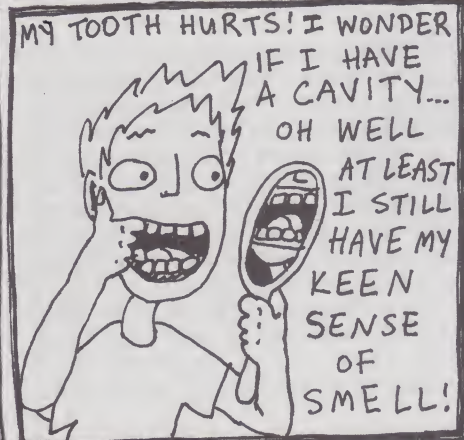


A RECENT STUDY PUBLISHED SUGGESTS THAT PESSIMISTS LIVE LONGER THAN OPTIMISTS BECAUSE OPTIMISTS HAVE A TENDENCY TO NEGLECT THEIR HEALTH (DUE TO AN EVERYTHING WILL BE OK ATTITUDE).

"THE LONGEVITY PROJECT: SURPRISING DISCOVERIES FOR HEALTH AND LONG LIFE FROM THE LANDMARK EIGHT DECADE STUDY" LESLIE R. MARTIN AND HOWARD S. FRIEDMAN

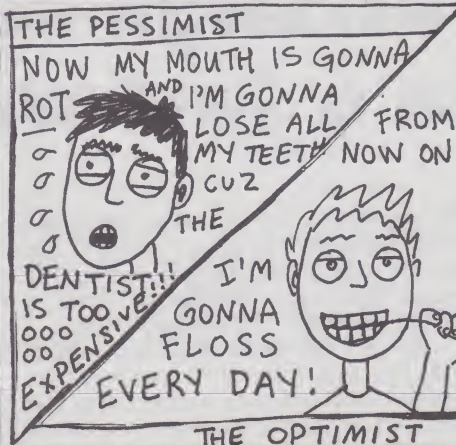


WHILE THE OPTIMIST DOES NOT GET UPSET



ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE MULTIPLE STUDIES SUGGESTING JUST THE OPPOSITE - THAT THE OPTIMISTS LIVE LONGER BECAUSE THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE OR SMOKE CIGARETTES.

"PERSONALITY AND LONGEVITY: KNOWN, UNKNOWN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND PERSONALIZED MEDICINE" BENJAMIN P. CHAPMAN



BUT WHY BE ONE OR THE OTHER? LET'S CHECK OUT THE REALIST



THE REALIST IS ABLE TO REACT TO A SITUATION WITHOUT FREAKING OUT.



THEN TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.



WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEGATIVE, BUT ALSO REALIZING THE POSITIVE.



TOOTH-HURTY IN THE AFTERNOON. WHAT TIME WAS IT WHEN THE REALIST GOT TO THE DENTIST? IT WAS





## SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

**"Music should be shared, not owned, by a generation."**

# MUSIC Age COPS

Something strange happened to me a few weeks ago. I was mistaken for a young guy. This took place at a Dick Dale concert. My mom called one day and asked me if I wanted to go with my brother to the show. I said of course. Who would pass up a chance to see the king of the surf guitar and hero to many garage bands? I had forgotten about it when my mom called again and reminded me it would be the next night and to call my brother.

On a Thursday night, we rode down to a small auditorium on what I think was Fullerton High School's campus. We found our seats up in the balcony and sat down

from some show he did in the sixties. That claimed the majority of the crowd.

First onto the stage was the bass player, Jimmy Dale the drummer and nineteen-year-old son of the seventy-four-year-old legend. We learned this because he told us later. Dale must have been somethin at fifty-three, huh? Then out strutted Dick Dale, sporting a black cowboy shirt with white trim, black slacks, and black addidas referee shoes. The back curtain opened and revealed the high school band. Together they broke into "Misirlou" and the house went nuts. The guitar sounded great. His pony tail swung back and forth.

reliving a past event with the man. Poor Mr. Dale looked overwhelmed by the crowd.

After we had our programs signed, my brother and I walked back to the truck laughing about that guy sitting in front of us. I thought about it after I got home how egotistical it was to make that statement. We go to punk shows for all ages and we actually find it kind of cool when some real young kid shows up with his sibling or parent.

Music should be shared, not owned, by a generation. If owning was the norm, classical music would be dead and jazz would pretty much have gone by the way side. If you

## Something Strange happened to me a few weeks ago...

behind this guy who brought a couple of Dale's albums and was chatting up some guys in front of him. I looked around the crowd that was shuffling in and admired the fact that the place was really filling up, when I heard this voice from in front say, "Now, I know why we're here, but you two are too young for this show."

I spun around and the fan boy with the records was looking up at my brother and me. Really? This guy's gonna claim rights to Dick Dale? I said, "Really? Do I pose a threat to your ability to get your albums signed?" Either I look really good for my age or this guy was feeling threatened. The difference in my age and his was maybe fifteen years; less with my brother. If only I had an AARP card, I would have shown him.

I leaned forward and asked him if he owns Berry, Holly, and Cochran also. Then I told him that he has to be at least as old as the guys in the Dickies. The blank stare was priceless. The guy was then saved by the M.C. for the night who first asked how many people were there because they knew Dale from *Pulp Fiction*. Then he asked how many of us were old punk rockers familiar with his music. I raised my right hand while tapping the guy in front with my left. The M.C. said he counted ten of us. He then asked how many knew him

This guy rocked. The song ended, the curtain closed, and I gave the guy a standing O. For the next couple hours he belted out song after song, ("Tidal Wave," "Surf Beat," "Riders in the Sky," "Pipeline," "Fish Taco," etc.)

He even did covers of Cash and Berry and—I'm sure—others. At one point he whipped out a harmonica, beat the drums, and then used the sticks to play some bass chords while the bass player held out his guitar. The man is a musical genius by all standards.

On into the night the sound of that Fender pounded on that poor old auditorium and, when the show ended, my ears rung with the joy of hearing a true master wield his craft. At the end, a thankful Dale came back and informed us that he was going to sign autographs in the theater lobby and that was why he couldn't do an encore. If I had to give my ears a rest, it might as well be for an autograph from a legend.

Before I stopped applauding, the guy in front of us had his loot in tow and was half way up the aisle to get his prize. I never did see that guy again. He must have been first in line and eager to get home and list that album on eBay. My brother and I waited for the chaos to die down, because—like most signing events—there was no orderly line, just a crush of people surrounding a table and everyone

merely own the artist, music just plain sucks. I personally relish the fact that I've seen, owned, and continue to share music from some of the biggest names of past years. Now I can add Dick Dale to that list.

### WHAT NOW? TOONS #1

By Keith Tucker, \$5 U.S.

Picked this one up while I was on vacation in New Mexico. It's a liberal's look at Obama's road to the White House. Unfortunately, with my dwindling trust for anything politics lately, I find it hard to read. It does, however, show that America—if not the world—is in a horrible state of "me now!" and the quick fix. That should be the name of a band. The artwork is superb, if not cut and pasted straight from the daily newspaper. The reality is that as much as we bring the failings of government to light, even satire goes down in flames. A couple of years ago, I would have been on board with "help a brother out," but why bother when simple fixes go by the wayside? If your liberal heart is still intact, then this is the book to read. Take it to your conservative friends and start a fight, because every truth can be twisted. (Tucker Toons, PO Box 220281, Milwaukie, OR 97222, [whatnowtoons.com](http://whatnowtoons.com))





JACKIE RUSTED

## ...I was mistaken for a young guy.

### WHAT NOW? TOONS#2

By Keith Tucker, \$5 U.S.

Here is more of the same bad news almost two years later: more hypocritical sayings and doings by the conservatives to ruin your day. If the panels weren't so cleverly drawn I couldn't stomach another page. Political cartoons used to make me laugh and think, but now they make me think how dreadful the planet has become. I need to befriend some sleestak and go live underground but, hell, they probably have a government too. (Tucker Toons, PO Box 220281, Milwaukie, OR 97222, [whatnowtoons.com](http://whatnowtoons.com))

### JONES MALTZ-BURGER COMIX#2 / BIRDNERD COMIX#2 split zine

By Robert Birdnerd and Alfonso Mata, Free  
Reading a daily diary with little to no

explanation of events gets me down. I'm sure this author means well but I found myself being drained of energy. I'm not familiar with the bands he mentions, though I'm always up for new music. I would, however, like information on the musical instrument (the shakuhachi) that he plays, and I don't want to go to the internet to research it. I'm sorry, but this one makes me feel like I'm sleepwalking and when I awake I just can't remember. ([azurduy@hotmail.com](mailto:azurduy@hotmail.com), [saytownreview@gmail.com](mailto:saytownreview@gmail.com), [facebook.com/saytownreview](https://www.facebook.com/saytownreview))

### THE KIDS OF WIDNEY HIGH #1

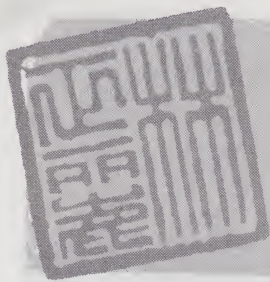
By various artists, \$4.99 U.S.

What an amazing concept for a comic book! Seven kids from a special-ed school in California who are in a singing group,

banded together with local artists and created the story for this book. One story that is drawn by six different artists gives this book a depth that really captivates the reader. Fighting corruption and prejudice in a modern society is the basis of the storyline. This book empowers kids with disabilities to succeed beyond the everyday, mundane tasks and creates superheroes with disabilities to quash the villains in a futuristic world. This is beautifully put together. I can't wait for the next story. ([atomicbasement.com](http://atomicbasement.com), [atomicbasement@yahoo.com](mailto:atomicbasement@yahoo.com))

—Gary Hornberger





## MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**"Loneliness is not remedied by quantity."**

# A Short Bridge for a Long Walk

The twelve bus was heading east from downtown Portland, across the Burnside bridge, to release everyone back into their natural habitats after their eight-hour workaturies. I stood toward the back exit, trying to breathe without inhaling the smells of a packed bus. Traffic was much slower than usual, with the blare of police sirens from black-and-white sedans speeding past us. I thought about where they were racing to, who they will rescue, who would be the next unarmed person they will shoot. I thought about how the wail of the siren—weeooooooooow weeooooooooow—forced all vehicles to one side, making us stop at green lights and drowning out our thoughts.

The bus slowly rolled up onto the bridge, surrounded by other slow-moving cars. As the bus crept up to the top, blue and red lights blinked through the big, tinted windows, and I squinted to find the car accident, but all I saw was a steady single lane of traffic.

That's when I saw him, in a dark hoodie sitting cross-legged on the bridge banister. A handful of folks, mostly uniformed, lined up along the sidewalk, all focused on the cross-legged man with his head hung low into his chest. The man looked up as if to answer a question, but I couldn't see if he spoke as the bus jerked forward past the waiting ambulance and cop cars, past the traffic and on our merry way. All of us on the same ride, but going different places.

I wondered where that man went and if he decided to set his feet back onto the concrete, or if he was let go and left.

\*\*\*

It's astonishing how easy it is for someone to feel so lonely even when they're surrounded by hundreds, thousands, or millions of people. The room moves in on the lonely—flooding oneself with anxiety and self-doubt in the inability to connect. Loneliness is not remedied by quantity, but rather the quality of connections with one another. The foundation of the connection bonds us, reminds us that we are not alone.

I have been alone and not lonely—standing on rolling grasslands and all I could see were the azure skies and lazy clouds. I stood there and inhaled and felt life and connected.

I have been in the middle of the masses, lived in cities with millions of people and felt

like there was no one around. This emotional isolation can wear someone down. The exhaustion and dejection can drive someone to reconsider whether this is all worth it, whether it's worth it to hit the snooze button or turn off the alarm altogether.

What if what woke you up was a clock record player? What if every morning your Mickey-Mouse-Rube-Goldberg-contraption alarm dropped a needle on your favorite piece of vinyl and every word that was sung meant something to you. You don't turn the alarm off—you let it play, to wake you and remind you why you have decided to wake up. You know that with this song, with this band, with this music, that there are entire communities built for it. You know you're waking up and there is a place for you.

This very magazine has created a space, however small, nuanced, flawed, and niche it is—it is still an important space. It's valuable because there exists no other specific space just like this one, where there is a roster of personalities and bands who have found a home based on the community that, in part, this magazine has built. There are connections in these pages because we see ourselves in each other, us in you and you in me.

But maybe this is all very disingenuous on my part, considering that I have stopped listening to music. This is a music magazine after all. It happened a few years ago when I began to exhibit all the symptoms that are mentioned in anti-depressant commercials.

"Do you no longer enjoy the things you once did?"

When it comes to music: yes.

Although I've been able to find joy again in many of the things I'm passionate about, I just cannot seem to muster the same exuberance and celebration that music once inspired in me. It may be because music had meant so much to me, that I had used it to comfort me when I was going through my personal hell and now I associate the entirety of my music catalogue to those stormy days.

Everything is unlistenable: Reigning Sound depresses me; not because of the heartbreak songs, but because I cannot feel that heartbreak any longer. Good Luck bums me out because "Come Home" is so beautiful, but reminds me that I don't have that "home" anymore. M.I.A. doesn't make me dance like I use to because I understand her songs about third world vs. developed world dichotomies

all too well. Against Me! no longer moves me. Listening to them makes me feel like I've felt all I could feel and now I'm depleted.

The list goes on and on. Track by track, this music haunts me, reminding me of who I once was, seemingly in a past life. I was once someone who breathed this, who could not fathom not listening to music at every spare moment my ears had. I had lived to soak in sonic reverberations through speakers, to feel the electricity in the airwaves. The bands I loved, the way I used to sweat through hot shows, and the words I used to loudly recite—it was all a part that made up my identity.

And just like that.

\*Poof\*

Gone.

So what the fuck am I doing here? Espousing the virtues of punk rock when I don't take solace in it at the moment? Don't I have fears that the muscle I used to devote to music has atrophied beyond recognition, that there is no way to resuscitate it?

I'm not so naïve as to think that, although everything is cyclical, I will round my way back to how I used to feel ten years ago. There is no winding the clock back, to when I was an eager twenty-one-year-old, ravenous for heartbeats and unbothered by heartbreak. I am here, two feet planted solidly on the ground, wiser for the wear.

I'm here because even though this community is built on our shared connection through music, we also understand it is bigger than that. This is a community built on ideas and critiques and growth. I'm still here because I believe that this space will still be around when I'm ready to appreciate music again.

I just hope that I'll still have folks around to make me mix tapes.

\*\*\*

Portland, Oregon is a city of bridges. Eleven bridges span across the Willamette River, connecting the west and east sides. For a few minutes of each trip, these towering structures of concrete and steel lift us above water and carry us safely to where we want to go. Everyday, the bridges build connections, crossing back and forth like the nerves in our bodies that help us to feel.

—Amy Adoyzie  
amyadoyzie.com





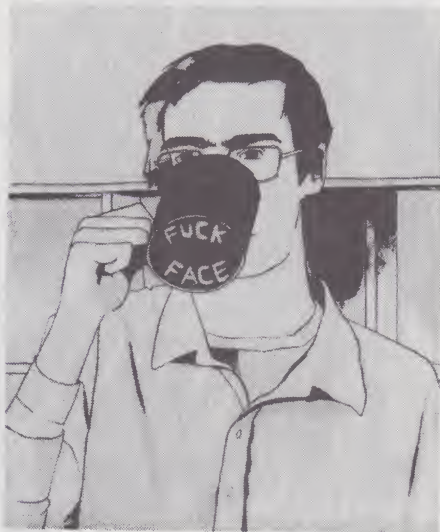


MARCOS SIREF

**All of us on  
the same ride,  
but going different places.**



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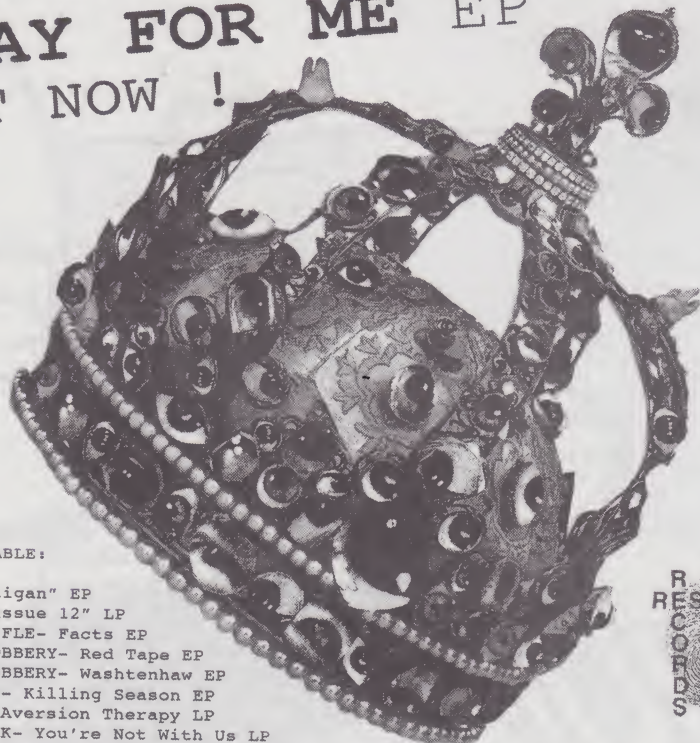


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## GUEST COLUMN

PAUL J. COMEAU

**“At what point did we cross a magic line and become adults?”**

# Ten and Thirty in 2011

The passage of time is an unusual thing. In many ways it's elastic. Events that happened years ago can feel like they happened a week ago to the mind's eye. Sitting here taking stock of the last ten years, it's crazy thinking about just how quickly time has flown by. 2001 was a year of milestones for me. I was working on part one of my college career, getting engaged to the girl I thought I was going to spend the rest of my life with, and leaving my teen years behind me to enter my twenties.

Life felt so simple and straightforward then. Everything I did revolved around going to shows, listening to music, writing, playing nerdy games like *Magic: The Gathering*, and hanging out with my fiancé and our circle of friends. Some big shakeups were on the horizon, though. In December, my fiancé and I moved in together, to a tiny upstairs apartment in suburban Connecticut. I can still remember the smell of the hallway leading up to our front door, which perpetually smelled of musty cat piss from a former occupant downstairs who let her cats use the hallway as their litter box. Our apartment was spacious, mostly because it was practically devoid of furniture, not because it was all that large. My music and book collection moved into a corner of the living room, stacked up in cardboard boxes against the wall. I didn't realize it at the time, but this would be their primary mode of storage for about the next six years. Here's why:

Almost as soon as we moved in, my fiancé and I began fighting. We were a pair of stubborn hot-headed vegan straight edge hardcore kids. We took slogans like “No Compromise,” perhaps a bit too seriously. At first the fights were petty: where I sat when working on my novel and how I let the manuscript take over the room, whose turn it was to do chores like trash and dishes, or where I left my dirty laundry. Things escalated quickly. We began fighting about how often I went to shows, how often I hung out with my friends, and how late I stayed out.

“We're adults now. We need to start acting like adults,” she said in the middle of one of our arguments. *Adults?* I thought. *At what point did we cross a magic line and become adults?* This was the same girl I'd spent most of the summer with, driving cross

country to see shows including huge fests like Hellfest in Syracuse and Monster Fest in Burlington, Vermont. We'd spent whole weekends following our favorite hardcore and punk bands at all their tour stops within driving distance. I didn't feel any different that December than I'd felt that July, sweating my balls off in a poorly air conditioned venue to see Earth Crisis play what was billed to be their last show.

In order to afford to move in together, we'd both taken “corporate” jobs working for different branches of a local bank. I quit going to school so I could work full-time. After going through the hassle of taking out and putting back in all my piercings daily, I'd given up and let them heal. I'd made a lot of sacrifices to make our relationship work, but giving up on all the things in life I enjoyed, to me that wasn't really living. Something had to give, and it did. By New Years, we'd split up.

The summer of 2002, I moved to Providence, Rhode Island to live with my friend Rob who'd recently dropped out of school and was in desperate need of a roommate. With no school, relationship, or other ties holding me, I happily moved. In Providence, I fell into what I thought at the time was my ideal lifestyle. I worked a shit-tastic, underpaying corporate job forty hours a week. I spent the rest of my time hanging out with friends, going to shows, and starting my first band, Truth Within The Lie, with Rob and two kids we met through flyers we posted around the city, Paul M. and Adam.

Providence in the early 2000s had more awesome independent record stores, bookstores, and other establishments supporting DIY music, culture, and art than I've encountered in any other city before or since. It was at one of these local establishments that I picked up my first issue of *Razorcake*. I'm sure I still have the issue buried somewhere in the pile of punk ephemera I've accumulated over the years, though it's missing from my collection of *Razorcake* back issues. Holding that issue in my hands, reading and rereading each column and review, I felt a connection with the magazine. The people writing truly cared about punk rock and hardcore music and wrote about it because they were

passionate about it, not because they were being paid to write about it like in *Rolling Stone* or *Spin Magazine*—magazines that didn't really know or care what was going on with punk anyways.

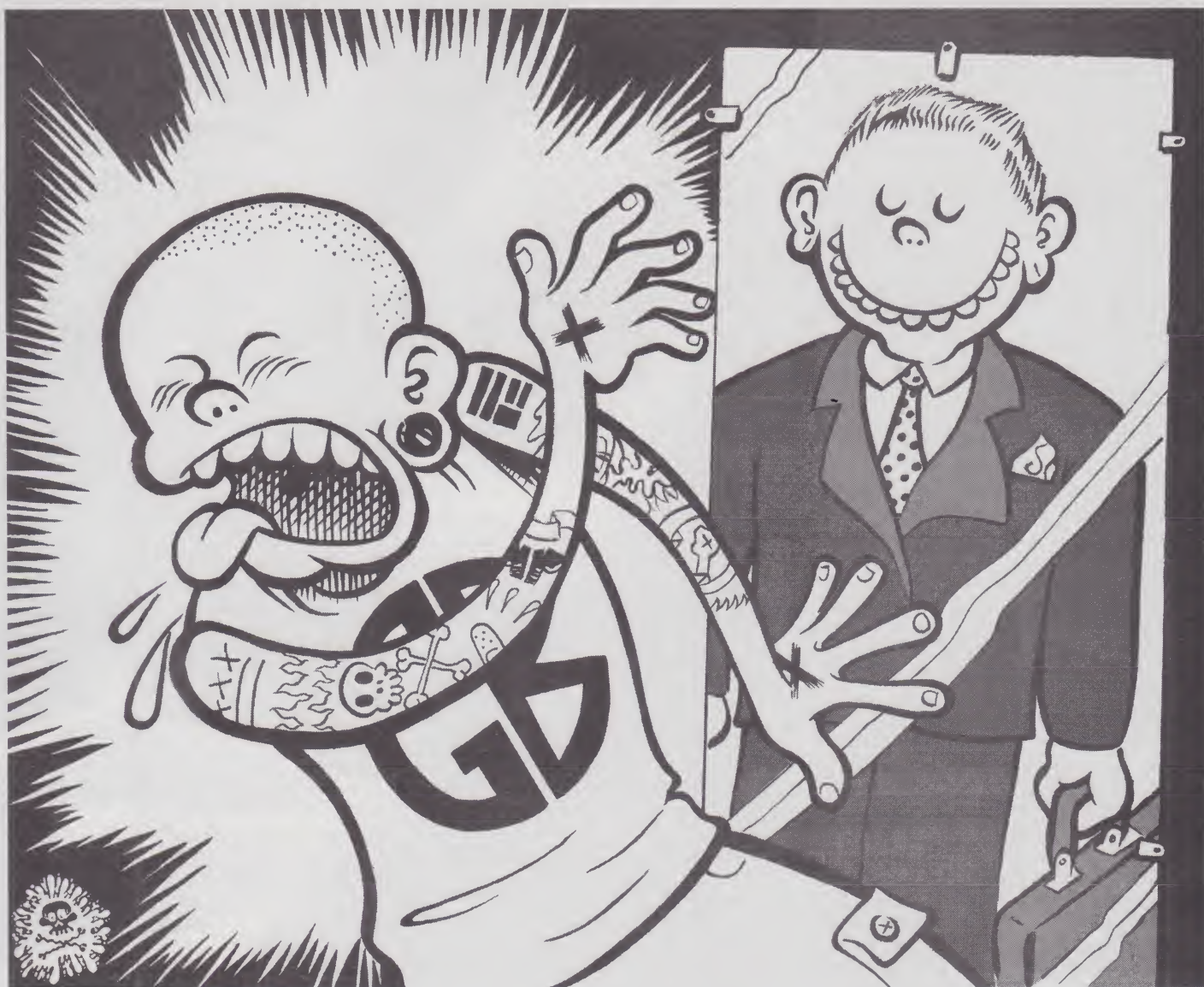
While I loved everything about living in Providence, part of me felt like I wasn't doing everything I could be doing with my life. This feeling stemmed largely from my regret at dropping out of school, a regret I sought to remedy. I began taking writing classes at Community College of Rhode Island in the evenings twice a week and looking at colleges in the Providence area where I might pursue a bachelor's degree in English or writing. I dusted off the cardboard boxes that held my book collection and started reading and writing regularly for the first time in a year, since moving to Providence. I began hanging out at the Providence Public Library, reading and making use of their free internet access to research schools.

Through this process, I came to realize that everything my ex-girlfriend thought about being an adult was totally false. I could hold down a job, pay my bills, go to school, and still have time for all the things I loved. I didn't need to sacrifice going to shows, listening to records, writing, and hanging out with my friends for some false idea of adulthood. I could be a responsible adult and still live the life that I wanted to live. That might seem obvious on the surface, but at the time it was a revelation to me.

Of course, no matter how idyllic our lives might seem, nothing can stay constant forever. In October 2003 I suffered a nasty head injury playing capture the flag at night with some friends on the URI campus. An ambulance ride and seven staples in my head later, I found myself with over \$5,000 in hospital bills. I could barely afford my living expenses as it was—doing paperwork at a doctor's office for little more than minimum wage—never mind having thousands of dollars in medical expenses to try to pay off. I had no choice at that point but to move back in with my parents in Connecticut.

As my thirtieth birthday approached this year, I found myself stepping back and reanalyzing everything that's happened to me in the last decade of my life. It's been seven years since I came back to Connecticut. In





ALEX BARRETT

**I could be a responsible adult and still live the life that I wanted to live. That might seem obvious on the surface, but at the time it was a revelation to me.**

that time, I've finally unpacked all my books and music from their boxes onto actual shelves and added hundreds more books, CDs, and records to the collection. I've played in three different short-lived bands with friends I've made since coming back to Connecticut, and I'm working on getting a new project going with some of those same friends. I've not only gone back to school, but graduated with a bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in writing. I spent the summer of 2006 attempting to bicycle cross-country from New York City to Portland, Oregon. I've written a novel that I'm in the process of editing and getting ready to shop around to agents and publishers. I've

also been given the opportunity to share my love of punk and hardcore music in the last year, by writing for a magazine that's been a frequent companion of mine for the past ten years. *Razorcake* is that magazine, and I have to thank Todd, Daryl, and everyone else who has worked over the years to make this magazine what it is, and for giving me the chance to contribute.

For how brief my time in Providence was, the years I spent there surrounded by great people taught me that it was possible to live the life I wanted to live without compromising my values, and I look back on that time with nothing but the best of memories. As *Razorcake* turns ten, I hope

that everyone reading this can look back on the first time they held an issue of this magazine in their hands and recall what it meant to them—I hope it still means the same to them now. Here's to the next ten years. And for Rob, Paul M., Adam, and all the other friends I made in Providence in the early 2000s, some lyrics I didn't write, but was happy to have the chance to sing:

*"These are the days of our lives."*  
They still are.

—Paul J. Comeau





# James Arthur..

Interview | **Ryan Leach**  
Photos | **Renate Winter**  
Layout | **Todd Taylor**





# ...really noisy, which I'm into. Controlled chaos...

Over the course of many years covering music, I've never encountered the level of enthusiasm from others that I did after mentioning I would be interviewing James Arthur. The general consensus among garage rock fans I spoke with was that James was overlooked and it was about time a rock rag gave him some coverage. Those positive responses let me know I was on the right track, shedding light on great artists—especially those who typically go unnoticed by glossier mags. That's why I cover music.

Looking over Mr. Arthur's discography—and taking into account his formidable guitar playing—the enthusiasm makes sense. James was a one-time member of Fireworks, The Necessary Evils, CC Riders, Feast Of Snakes, and The Golden Boys. His latest project, James Arthur's Manhunt, places him in a relatively new place as band leader and songwriter. The group's self-titled debut contains some of James' best work to date. With several releases on the horizon and heaps of unreleased material at his disposal, there's no shortage of music from James in sight.

**Ryan:** You were born in Texas, correct?

**James:** I was born and raised in Texas. I grew up in a small town in east Texas. East Texas is more of the Deep South. It's a lot different from a place like Austin and the general west Texas area. I dealt with all the problems you'd encounter in a small Southern Baptist area. I wanted to get out of there. I was accused of being into all kinds of weird stuff, like Satan worshipping. [laughs] This was when Geraldo was covering it. (In 1988, Geraldo Rivera produced a TV special entitled *Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground*.) It was total nonsense. I can tell you weird stories for days about hillbillies and rednecks. I was also really into skateboarding. This was back in the '80s, when you'd get your ass kicked for riding a skateboard.

**Ryan:** During the late '80s, Texas claimed the legendary vert skater Jeff Phillips.

**James:** I looked up to those guys on Zorlac

Skateboards. Certainly Jeff Phillips. We'd go to their skate demos. Skateboarding sort of leads you into punk rock. I was also into classic rock. For whatever reason, I really liked Cream. When I was sixteen, my sister got pregnant. She was about a year older than me. It was a small town scandal. So my family moved to Denton, Texas. Denton is north of Dallas. It's a college town. A lot of bands come out of there. The Riverboat Gamblers are from Denton. In addition to skating, I was also into getting drunk and collecting records. I met Darin (Lin Wood) in Denton. I joined Fireworks. Darin was about six years older than me. I was still in high school when I met him.

**Ryan:** If I'm not mistaken, Fireworks started sometime around 1992.

**James:** That sounds right. I graduated high school in 1991, but I had been hanging out with Darin for a while before I joined Fireworks. I'd go to his shows. Darin had a minimalist rockabilly band called The Red Devils. They'd set up with a reel-to-reel for their live shows. It would play the drum parts that they had recorded. They would put their two guitars over that. It was really fucked up and cool. I was getting into weird rockabilly and blues at that point. Darin would make me mix tapes. He had spent a lot of time in New York; he'd been around. I was regularly going back and forth between Denton and Dallas to play with Fireworks. The band existed before I joined them. Chris Merlick played guitar in the beginning. Fireworks had three guitarists at one point—me, Chris, and Darin. We put out a record on Crypt (1994's *Set the World on Fire*) and went to Europe, but then Darin started getting into drugs again. That pretty much put an end to Fireworks.

**Ryan:** Going back a bit, Fireworks released an early In The Red Records single (1993's *Untrue*). Was Darin your connection to Larry Hardy (founder of In The Red)?

**James:** Definitely. I didn't know anyone at that point. I was just a punk kid. Darin had played in '68 Comeback as well. Darin was a real go-getter back then. *Untrue* was a really early In The Red release. I remember meeting Larry Hardy on tour in California. I think he was still working at a grocery store then.

**Ryan:** Going to Europe must have been pretty big for you. You mentioned coming from a very provincial town.

**James:** I had never been on a plane before that trip. I had hitchhiked a lot, though, venturing out to California. But Fireworks put the bug in me. After that, I just wanted to play in bands.

**Ryan:** Fireworks ended acrimoniously, but it seems like Darin was a bit of a mentor for you, at least in terms of music.

**James:** Darin turned me on to so much stuff. He got me into the Gories. We were friends at one point. It did end bitterly. Fireworks was all I had at that point in my life. It was a big deal for me.

**Ryan:** You mentioned earlier that he'd been in New York. I know Darin played with Cop Shoot Cop briefly.

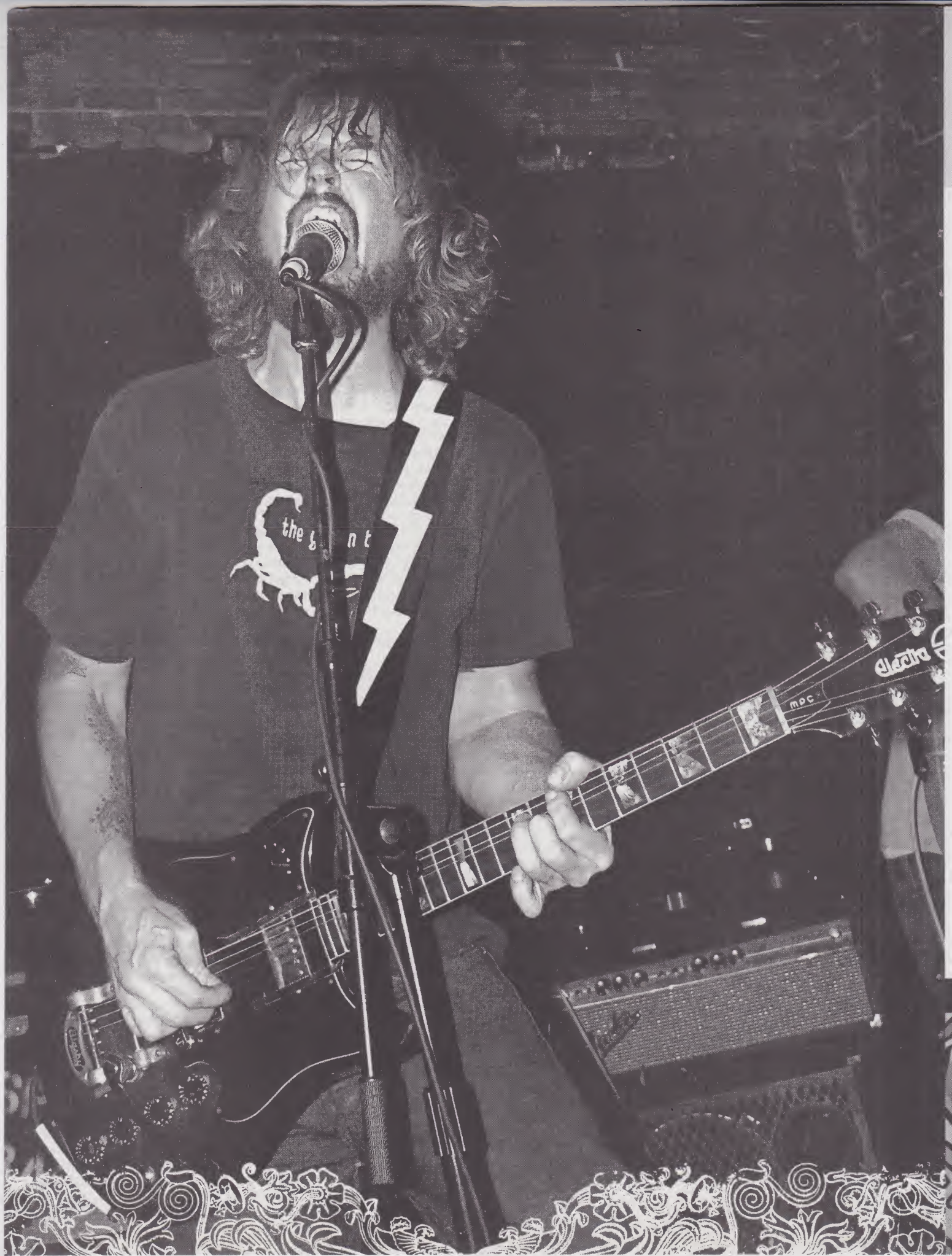
**James:** Yeah. He had played with the Black Snakes, too. Richard Kern and Jack Natz were in the group as well. It was pre-Cop Shoot Cop. Very sleazy, New York rock'n'roll. I don't really speak with Darin anymore. However, with the advent of social networking, we have exchanged a few messages over the years.

**Ryan:** You moved out to California to play in The Necessary Evils with Steve Pallow. I understand that Larry Hardy helped you guys get off of the ground.

**James:** Yes, but I had met Steve Pallow earlier. Fireworks had toured Europe with The Beguiled. Steve and Mike Ball (of The Beguiled) and I got along really well. Then Mike was killed by a drunk driver (September 1994). He died leaving a Fireworks show, actually. It was a real shame and totally shocking.

After The Beguiled ended, Steve Pallow had this band called The Black Panthers. He played me some of the recordings they had made, which were amazing. I was on tour with the Cheater Slicks for some reason. I was just riding around in the van with them and we were listening to the Black Panthers recordings. Steve and I talked about working together. Larry sort of initiated what became the Necessary Evils. He sent me the money to fly out to Los Angeles to play with Steve. A lot of the early Necessary Evils material







# It was so fucking gross down in Hollywood. There was so much desperation. It was weighing on our minds a lot. I was angry and hungry.

was based off of the material Steve had written with Mike Ball. Initially, I wasn't really bringing much to the table except for my noisy guitar parts. Steve ended up living right behind Larry in Hollywood. And I'd stay with Steve.

**Ryan:** The Necessary Evils material is credited to "The Necessary Evils." As you mentioned, the first album was largely written by Steve and Mike Ball. How did the songwriting dynamic change for the second LP, *Sicko inside Me*? Jimmy Hole was on bass by then.

**James:** The first album (*Spider Fingers*, 1997) we recorded next to Mike McHugh's studio (The Distillery) at a place called Control World in Costa Mesa. The *Sicko inside Me* (1999) album we recorded at The Distillery with Jimmy Hole. We wanted a bass player, so we got Jimmy. The first show we were supposed to play with Jimmy was up in San Francisco. I don't think the show happened because we showed up late, but Jimmy head butted this dude at the venue. He just dropped this guy. I remember thinking, "Wow! This guy is cool." The fact that Jimmy is still alive is pretty amazing. He's such a nice guy; you'd never expect that other side of him.

**Ryan:** Was Jimmy doing design work for In The Red Records then?

**James:** I'm not sure. I think he was primarily working for Epitaph then.

**Ryan:** *Sicko inside Me* is a thoroughly Los Angeles album. The ominous incidental music; the 1930s science-fiction monologues. The song "Man from Mars" about Forrest Colson—the early '50s holdup man who, dressed as a space alien, performed robberies around LA. The record has a Mike Davis *City of Quartz* and Kenneth Anger feel to it. Behind Los Angeles' boosterism lies a pretty ugly place. Were you thinking along these lines when you were coming up with material for *Sicko inside Me*?

**James:** You'd have to talk with Steve about that. He's the movie collector. Steve's also an encyclopedia of weird California history. A lot of the incidental music was the result of us sitting in Steve's garage and playing with broken synthesizers and tape loops. I do think living in Hollywood had something to do with the sound of that record. It was so fucking gross down there. There was so

much desperation. It was weighing on our minds a lot. I was angry and hungry. I was going through a journal the other day that I had written during that time period. It was depressing to read. It seemed like every day you'd see something fucked up. It's not a cool place. That's why we all moved to Burbank, but in terms of songs, we'd just rifle them off: "Okay! That's a song. Next! Let's throw some weird noise in there." It wasn't like our precious baby or anything.

**Ryan:** If I'm not mistaken, The Necessary Evils wound down sometime around 2000. Did you move back to Texas?

**James:** My wife (D'lana) and I moved to Memphis in 1999. Steve Pallow was working all of the time. I think Jimmy had gone to jail. Kyle (John Hall), The Necessary Evils' drummer, had moved to San Francisco. Kyle fell out of a window—from either the second or third story—and ended up shattering both of his heels. On *Sicko inside Me*, he's playing drums in a wheelchair. There was no falling out with The Necessary Evils. We're all super tight still. It was just time to move on.

**Ryan:** Not many people know about the CC Riders, largely because your self-titled album received a limited, one-hundred copy CD-R release (Contaminated Records, 2001). Nevertheless, the lineup was heavy: you, Jeffrey Evans, Alicja Trout, and Jay Reatard. How did you guys get together?

**James:** When I moved to Memphis, I played with The Reatards briefly. In Memphis everyone plays with one another. There are some recordings out there of me playing with The Reatards. It's just me, Jay, and Rich (Crook). I have no idea what happened to them.

**Ryan:** That's amazing. A lot of great people played with The Reatards. Greg Cartwright was even a Reatard briefly.

**James:** Yeah. It was cool playing with Jay. One of the last times I saw Jay, he was talking about doing a Reatards reunion show with everyone who'd played in the band. After playing with Jay, I approached Jeffrey Evans. I was really into '68 Comeback and The Gibson Bros. I saw the Gibson Bros. with Jon Spencer on guitar when I was in high school. I was really hammered when I asked Jeffrey if we could play together. I'm not sure how the lineup came together for CC Riders. That band was a lot of fun. I have a set list from the group that I saved. I framed

it. Jeffrey used to write the show number and the tempos for the songs on the set list.

**Ryan:** Do you remember recording the CC Riders album?

**James:** They recorded that after I moved back to Dallas. I think I might be on some of those tracks. I remember recording some stuff with Jeffrey.

**Ryan:** He mentions you on the recordings. Before one solo, he yells something like, "Take it, James."

**James:** [laughs] Yeah. We might have recorded some of that material at Jeffrey's house. At the time I was also in The New Memphis Legs with Eric Friedl (aka, Eric Oblivian). We recorded some tracks with Jeffrey. Jay was on those recordings, too.

**Ryan:** You were playing with Jay and Alicja as they were forming The Lost Sounds.

**James:** That's right. I actually still have one of their organs. Whenever I talk with Alicja, she always reminds me that she needs to get her organ back! Jay and Alicja were super volatile as a couple but also very creative.

**Ryan:** You played drums on the first Golden Boys LP.

**James:** Feast Of Snakes was the first band I played in when I got back to Dallas, though. That was with Alex Cuervo, Hank Tosh, and Angelique Congleton. Mark Ryan from The Reds played with us briefly. I had another band called The Signals. We recorded an amazing record. It was just organ, guitar, and drums. Unfortunately, the album never came out.

**Ryan:** Memphis seemed like a good fit for you. What brought you back to Texas?

**James:** D'lana and I started our business (Moon Shine Shades) in Memphis. We manufacture lamps and lightshades for a lot of big businesses—like Chili's Restaurants—and we sell stuff online to people. Dallas is the home of the lighting industry, which is why we moved back to Texas.

A lot of people who work for us are in bands. They are always on tour, so we give them work when they need it. A lot of people from Austin and San Antonio were coming out to our place in Spring Branch for jobs. Matt Hoopengardner came out to work for us. Matt and I just clicked. He was a cool dude and he wrote songs. That was the start of The Golden Boys. But then Matt and I couldn't find a drummer. So I said, "Fuck it. I'll learn how to play drums." I had met Wes



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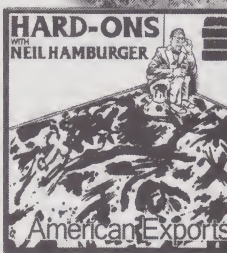
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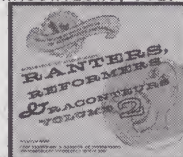
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James Arthur's Manhunt

## It's more about how you're saying something as opposed to what you're saying.

(John Wesley Coleman) out in Denton. He was working for us too and joined up. Later on, Ney Ney (Nathan Arbeitman) wanted to go on tour with us. So we said, "Shit, why don't you play keys?" We put out some singles. Italian labels like Solid Sex Lovie Doll released one of our 7"s. Perpetrator from New Zealand did another one.

I started Hook Or Crook Records around this time with Chris Owen, who was living in San Francisco. For some reason, Chris and I decided that our first three releases (The Golden Boys, Killer's Kiss, The Rebel) should come out on CD. [laughs] I still have boxes of them. Andrew Tolley put out the vinyl release of *Scorpion Stomp #2* (The

Golden Boys' first LP) on Perpetrator.

**Ryan:** Did you and Chris start Hook Or Crook with the intention of self-releasing The Golden Boys' CD as a way to jumpstart the label? Or did Hook Or Crook just coincide with the release?

**James:** I've never had a game plan. Chris is just an old buddy. He used to intern for Crypt Records. He moved out to California. We were chatting on the phone one day and decided to start a label. Then the reality set in a few releases later! I had to get out for personal reasons. Chris then took it over. It was cool for a little while. We were rockin' there.

**Ryan:** You did a great Demon's Claws album

(Live in Spring Branch, TX).

**James:** They came down here to my place. Demon's Claws are great. Matt Hoopengardner and I recorded that album.

**Ryan:** With your new project, James Arthur's Manhunt, you've been into instrumentals.

**James:** A lot of that had to do with Steve Pallow. He had asked me to create instrumental music for a movie he was making. I've got tapes and tapes of stuff. I found these tapes of my grandfather singing at funerals. He used to go to Baptist churches and sing there. I'd run his vocals through effects boxes and make them sound creepy.

**Ryan:** The Manhunt record was a little bit of a departure for you.





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**James:** Well, after I quit The Golden Boys, I had to take a break from music.

**Ryan:** You dropped out for a while.

**James:** I thought I was pretty much done after The Golden Boys. The *Manhunt* record was me messing around with instruments at the house, just after that period. My wife and I adopted our daughter then, too. I started getting back into music with Manhunt. Again, Steve was really the impetus for that. Steve and I have always kept in touch, but then the movie Steve was working on fell through. My buddy Richard Stanley from Australia—he was in the Onyas—was really into the work I was recording for Steve's movie. Richard and I ended up recording some things. He encouraged me to put the songs out. That's how the Aarght! Records LP came about. I sent a bunch of songs to Richard and Mikey (Young) of Eddy Current Suppression Ring. Mikey mastered and sequenced the record. I sent him twenty or thirty songs. I told him: "Take what you want." I've got hours of music recorded.

**Ryan:** You were recording this material as you were getting out of a low point. It seems like you've opened the floodgates: you've got singles with Perpetrator and In The Red planned, plus a record on 12xU.

**James:** Manhunt is pretty intense. There's going to be elements of the instrumental stuff. That's partially because I don't like recording with a whole band as much as doing it myself. Recording with a group is laborious; people spend a lot of time staring at each other with nothing to do.

**Ryan:** With the instrumental material, you can get it done the way you want to when you record it on your own. You don't have people looking at you, asking, "What's that chord sequence again?" Plus you're creating some pretty idiosyncratic effects with your guitar.

**James:** Totally. There are elements on *Manhunt* that were the result of me testing out microphones; some really random things. I'd get an idea and start adding onto it. I'm not a big songwriter. I don't like writing lyrics. Even to this day, I'll change lyrics to songs at shows. To me, it's more about how you're saying something as opposed to what you're saying. I'm much more interested in the pattern of the vocals. I've got my house set up where I can flip shit on and start recording.

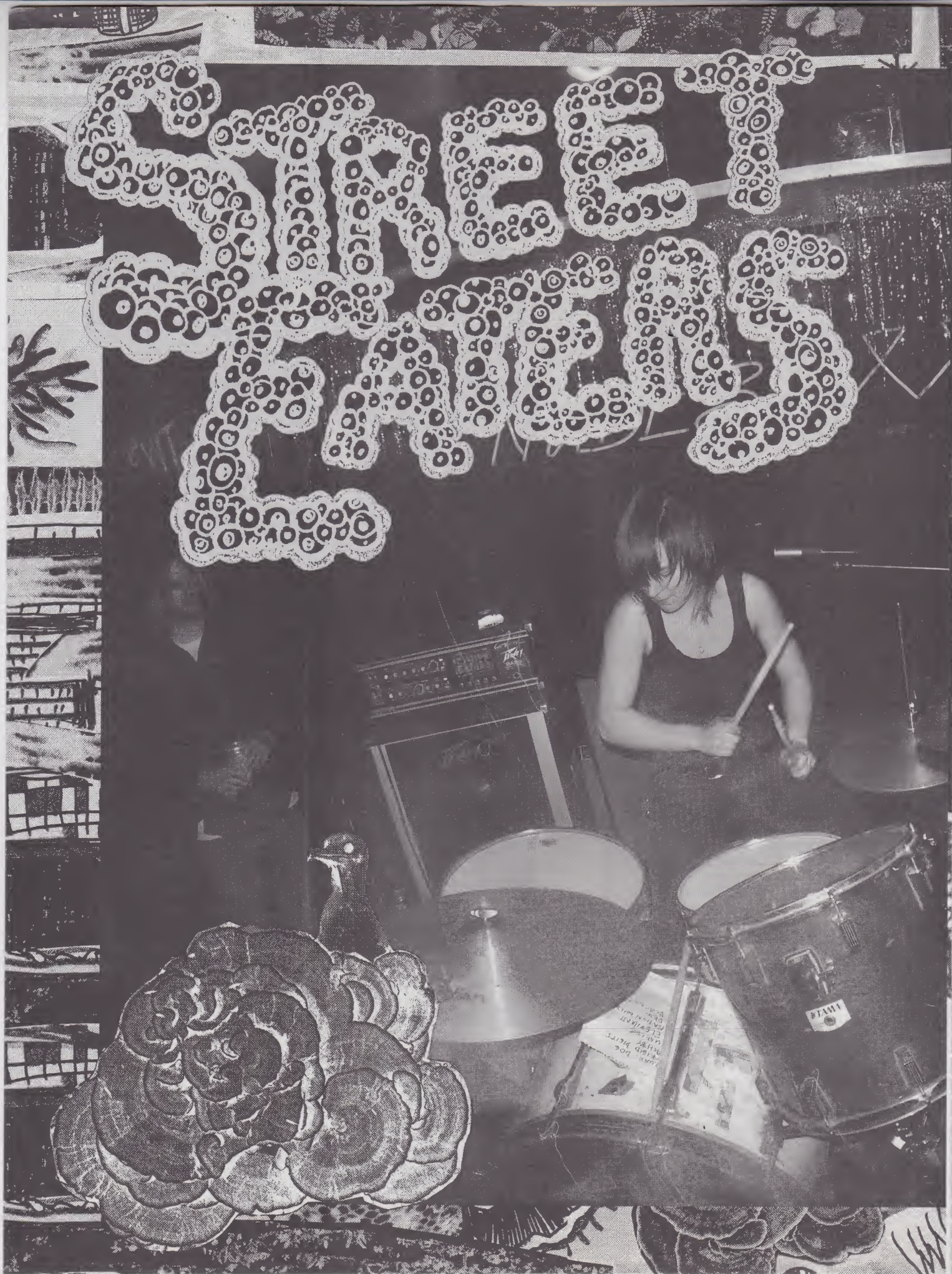
**Ryan:** Is the lineup for Manhunt still pretty loose?

**James:** Now I've got a core group. Bryan Schmitz—the bassist of Golden Boys—is in the band. My other friends Sean Morales and Orville Bateman Neeley III are in the group too. Orville is in Bad Sports. He's a kid—twenty-five—and a real go-getter. Manhunt is a real band, which is what I wanted. The soundtrack stuff is hard to pull off live. Manhunt is really noisy, which I'm into. Controlled chaos.

[myspace.com/jarthurjarthur](http://myspace.com/jarthurjarthur)  
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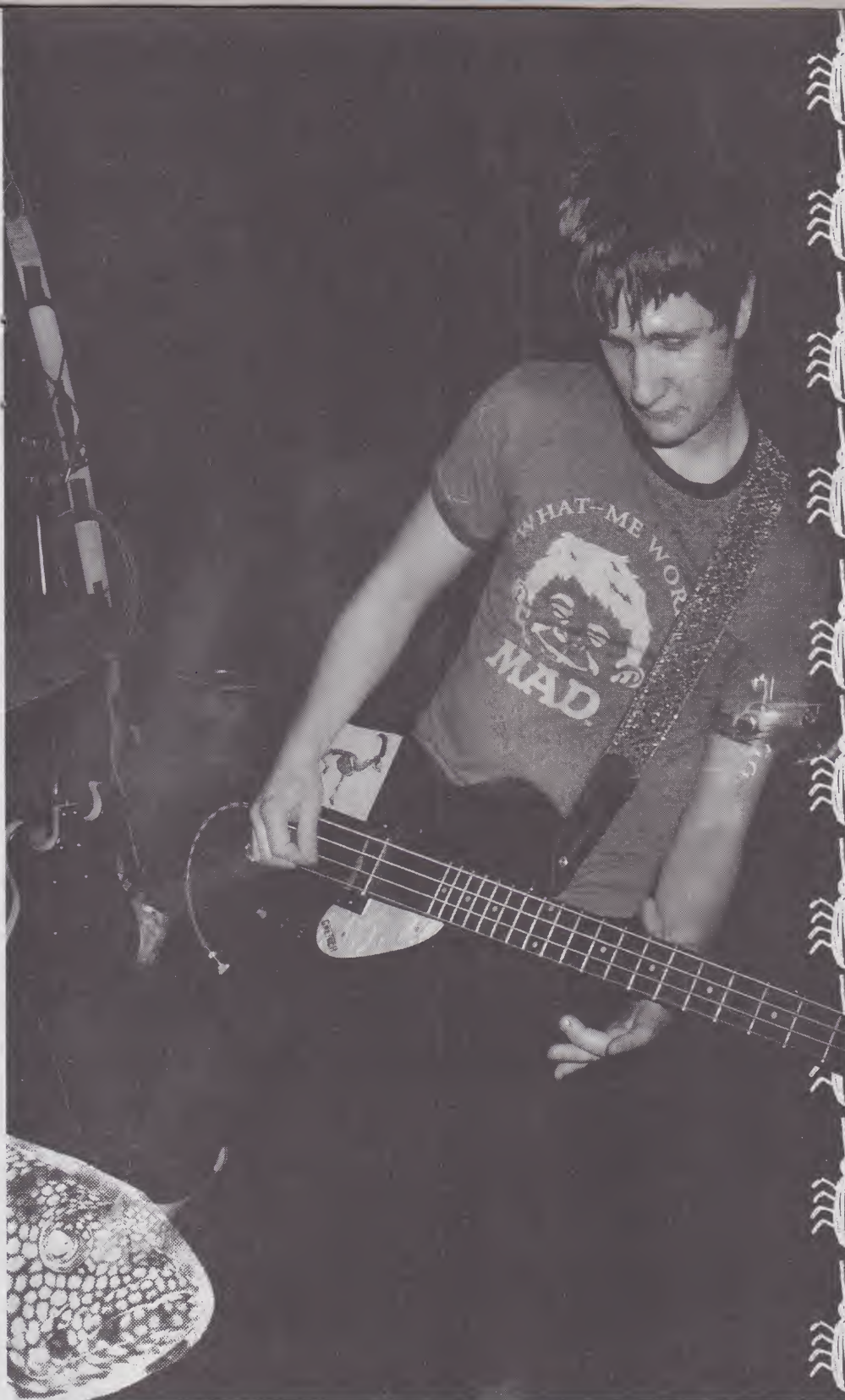






Small, illegible text or a list of names written on a piece of paper or a drum head, possibly a setlist or credits.





SHANTY CHERYL, both photos

**MEGAN MARCH- DRUMS, VOCALS**  
**JOHN MINK- BASS, VOCALS**  
**INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR & ADRIAN CHI**  
**PHOTOS BY EL DIABLO & SHANTY CHERYL**  
**TRANSCRIPTION BY SELENA MONE & TODD**  
**ART BY ADRIAN CHI, LAYOUT BY DARYL**

I have a super sensitive bullshit detector.

I'm suspicious of art that tries to pull one over on its audience instead of attempting to enrich, explain, or entertain.

I'm far too much of a pragmatist, far too much of a punk rocker, to stand around listening to "something that sounds like orange" or watch someone noodle away on their instruments for more than fifteen seconds... okay, ten seconds. I like my music to drive, to go somewhere with a map, usually pretty fast. Sure, that may be viewed as a limited way of looking at music, but I see it as having focus. I'm constantly finding myself awash in music that excites me.

There are certain musicians I'm willing to follow and trust into traditionally "inhospitable" or "questionable" territory. John The Poly-Pseudonymed (No, Mink, Geek, No Moniker) is one such musician. When I first saw the Fleshies in 2001, I didn't believe that voice—part yowl, part scream, part screech, part liquid gravel, part Freddie Mercury falsetto—all came out of him.

He paraded around in filthy underwear and squirmed on the floor during the shows. Afterwards, he donned glasses and quietly and politely sat behind the merch table.

The mouse and the lion. The rager and the thinker.

The Street Eaters are a two-piece—drums and bass—a husband and wife band from the East Bay. Megan March is a powerful drummer and singer. She's a wonderful counterpoint to John's mania. The music they make sounds larger and fuller than what's expected of most two-piece acts. Their music can fill the expanse of a room sonically, intellectually, personally, and politically. They're fully armed. They're also a little arty; the type of arty I appreciate.



Think of them as an adventure with treasure at the end. Think of bubbling experiments that are working. Think of two long-time punk rockers, community-proud, clicking open a huge safe that holds one of the ultimate secrets: how to age without compromise, how to build a life worth living one note at a time.

**WE'RE TRYING TO SAY  
THAT IT ISN'T HUMAN  
NATURE JUST BECAUSE  
SOMETHING EXISTS IN  
NATURE, TO BE AN  
ASSHOLE, IT DOESN'T  
HAVE TO BE PART OF  
HUMAN NATURE.  
WE'RE BEYOND THAT.**



**HAT'S SCIENCE.  
OBSERVATION.  
HYPOTHESIS.  
EXPERIMENTATION.  
CONCLUSION.  
AM!**





**Todd:** John, when was the last time you were intentionally set on fire?

**John:** [long pause] I think that was probably when I was playing a show at Thee Parkside in San Francisco.

**Todd:** Was that with the Bob Weirdos?

**John:** No. That was with Thee Clash. And, uh, that's my one-man noise band.

**Todd:** [laughter] Okay.

**John:** And I set myself on fire.

**Todd:** You set yourself on fire?

**John:** Yeah. I was overpowered by funk.

**Todd:** And how did you set yourself on fire?

**John:** It was rubbing alcohol and a lighter and way too much of a polyester track suit. Fortunately, I don't really set myself on fire so much anymore. Probably for the best.

**Todd:** No first or second-degree burns? You just...

**John:** Ah, just a little. Just a little, maybe little bit of a...

**Megan:** Singed.

**John:** Yeah, a little singed. But the Street Eaters don't set ourselves on fire. Not, at least, not literally. More metaphorically.

**Megan:** Set our brains on fire.

**John:** Yeah, we want to set the worlds on fire.

**Megan:** Yeah. [laughter]

**Todd:** So, Megan, I tried to stitch some stuff together. Did you start playing music because someone from Kamala And The Carnivores was tardy?

**Megan:** I guess I was already playing music at that point. I started playing music 'cause my sister is a punk who's twelve years older than me. She was really involved in the Gilman scene and San Francisco DIY scene. She got me playing music when I was probably twelve or so. We were in a band together called Shimsaw and that's when she was trying to get me to play bass.

But, I started playing drums when I was jamming with Hers Never Existed, which featured Kamala from Kamala And The Carnivores on drums. I just started tooling around on her drums and she was cool with it. Sometimes, I'd get there early or they'd be late—which I guess is kind of the same thing—and that's kind of where I started figuring out my first beats and stuff. Yeah, it's that kit.

**Todd:** How old were you then?

**Megan:** About eighteen or so.

**Adrian:** I'm wondering if you guys have a deep respect for cockroaches?

**John:** Absolutely.

**Megan:** Definitely.

**John:** The most enduring form of life on earth, practically—beyond certain bacterial forms—cockroaches are a very serious insect. They haven't changed much over the last several hundred million years. Maybe even close to a billion years. Maybe the closest modern land-dwelling thing we have to a trilobite. They're going to outlive all of us.

**Megan:** We've seen big ones, too. I remember when we played in Tennessee that one time and we were in this warehouse

space and there were cockroaches that were huge.

**John:** Big palmettos.

**Megan:** Huge.

**Megan:** And they were just coming right at us.

**Todd:** [laughs] Undeterred.

**John:** In Central America, they have the ones that are probably five to six inches long and about that broad, but they're mainly outdoor.

**Megan:** Do those hiss at you?

**John:** No, that's the Madagascar ones. Any insect that can hiss at me, I have a lot of respect for.

**Todd:** The Brown Wandering Star cockroach is the insect with the biggest dispersion universally.

**John:** Really? I didn't know that. Now I'm going to file that in the factoids.

**Todd:** This question has nothing to do with cockroaches. Why is it "drums and bass" and not "drums and guitar"?

**John:** It kind of was a matter of happenstance and circumstance with us that related to our own past experiences in bands. I've never played guitar. I have played bass and I used to be really into the idea of bass from a very young age and really into Nomeansno and the like. I played in Harbinger back in the late '90s, when I was really young.

**Todd:** That's with Cometbus and...

**John and Todd** [in unison]: Eggplant

**John:** Yeah. I was the kid in the band. I played with them and just kind of put down the bass for a long time after that. I was never really that great in that band on bass. I had a lot of fun, but then I started fiddling around with it again. And we had a bass around. We had a bass amp around.

[to Megan] You played drums. We knew we wanted to do something together. Megan is great on drums and guitar and singing. So it's like, "Well, we can configure this any of a number of different ways." But we plugged in her old Peavey amp that she had from when she was a teenager. I just turned up the pre- before I turned up the post-...

**Todd:** I don't know what you're talking about.

**John:** The pre-volume gain, so like it's just a gain...

**Todd:** Still don't know what you're talking about.

**John:** Well, basically it just made it really grind-y.

**Megan:** He turned up the crunch.

**John:** The crunch, yeah... Totally, totally, and I was like, "This sounds so good."

**Megan:** He turned up the awesome.

**Todd** [to Megan]: Thank you.

**John:** We just started going from there and that sort of just developed into whatever it is that we do. We realized that it kept growing from there. We just built on that and tried to fill as much sonic space as possible. We both sing so much.

**Megan:** The bass has less strings, so I would imagine it'd be less intimidating...

**John:** I'm mainly a singer. The fewer strings the better, in my mind.

**Megan:** Having it just be bass and drums has forced us to develop the way that we play those instruments. I've been playing drums for a really long time, but to be singing and playing drums at the same time, I had to re-teach myself how to do certain things so I could pull it off and get the breathing right. Also, it's just a matter of doing what we were comfortable with.

**John:** There's plenty of antecedents in that department (two-piece bands), too. I mean you've got, Godheadsilo, going back. Big Business. Now they're a four-piece, but they did the same kind of stuff. And The Need, Heavens To Betsy... Actually, The Need was guitar.

**Megan:** But I think Heavens To Betsy was bass...

**John:** Yeah, bass and drums. So there are antecedents. It's what made sense for us at the time.

**Todd:** And I think that you play the bass how Lemmy (Kilmister, Motörhead) plays the bass. Like a guitar.

**John:** I try to do that because I have no idea how to play the bass properly.

**Todd:** Right—which is great.

**John:** I always just want to make a lot of noise and a lot of fuzz and make some pretty textures and write some neat melodies. And Megan writes neat melodies, too. 'Cause she first started on bass when she was a kid.

**Megan:** Sometimes I write bass lines and show 'em to John. Then he develops them and we make it into a song.

**John:** It's pretty organic, the way that we write.

**Todd:** It sounds very fluid.

**John:** Yeah, very fluid.

**Adrian:** Did you guys build a practice studio in your basement?

**Megan:** We did.

**Adrian:** Do you have a lot of late-night practice sessions now?

**John:** Well, late-ish. Usually, by the time it comes to be around late, late night we're just upstairs...

**Megan:** Cooking, hanging out.

**John:** Watching *Law & Order* or something.

**Megan:** We live in a really densely populated neighborhood, so we try and not push the limits too much. 'Cause before we had the floating box—or the Rock Palace as we call it—we'd get the cops called on us. So we decided to commit to really building something that would be super soundproof. We just want to make sure that we can use it forever, you know?

**John:** It really does cut out most of the sound. It sounds like a loud stereo from the street. Totally worth the time and energy and materials we put into it.

**Megan:** And the walls are painted gold, which I find to be quite inspiring for music.

**John:** And it's short, but, you know, we're kind of short...





**Megan:** It's very tiny.

**John:** When Megan's other band, Wild Assumptions, was in there when it was its original lineup, it was two very tall guys.

**Todd:** Who had to hunch over?

**John:** They had to kind of hunch over.

**Megan:** They couldn't jump if they got excited.

**Todd:** You have to lay down and do the Worm, or something.

**Megan:** Wiggle.

**Adrian:** Have you ever had any Hot Wheels collectors come to a Street Eaters show?

**John and Megan:** [laugh]

**John:** I'm waiting, I'm waiting.

**Megan:** Not that we know of.

**John:** You can look for the people that look kind of disappointed, but the Hot Wheels collectors might have a specific type of disappointment on their face, especially at the merch table.

**Todd:** How did the name come along then? Were you aware that there are Hot Wheels cars named Street Eaters prior?

**Megan:** It was when we were traveling around. When you're playing in bands, you're always kind of trying to think of cool band names. You sort of keep a list.

**Todd:** I'm not even in a band and I think of them.

**Megan:** Yeah, you got to think of that stuff. It was one of those, band names where, "Man, that sounds really good. Alright, let's write it down. Don't forget

it." When we started jamming, it just kind of stuck.

**John:** We did the Google searches and sometimes it's kind of a matter of like, what's going to create the least problems for us with X band name? If it's Street Eaters, I guess if we're competing for search space with Hot Wheels, it's probably not going to be too awful.

**Megan:** It's not the worst thing.

**John:** It's not as bad as the food truck thing that's happening in the world.

**Todd:** Yeah, but you have to be conscientious, because Funyuns became Onion Flavored Rings. Red Cross became Redd Kross, Salvation Army was cease and desisted.

**John:** And that was like, pre-internet.

**Megan:** Yeah, things are totally different now.

**Todd:** Instantaneous.

**Megan:** Green Jelly... (formerly Green Jellö)

**John:** Oh man...

**Megan:** I went there, I said it.

**John and Todd:** [laugh]

**John:** Fleshies played a show with them at Mr. T's Bowl, six people. This is after "Three Little Pigs." And they were really sweet and it was awesome.

**Todd:** Their drummer was going to be the drummer for Off With Their Heads, but it didn't work out. He was also the roadie for Nashville Pussy.

**John:** Whoa.

**Megan:** That guy gets around.

**Todd:** Okay, let's talk about Gilman for a bit. I'm going to pretend I don't know anything about it because I think it's an important illustration— Los Angeles doesn't have one, and Los Angeles has struggled mightily. I'm talking Los Angeles County proper. It's eighteen million people and every effort to get an all-ages, punk rock-friendly space has failed. Berkeley was able to do that. Megan, did you start volunteering there when you were twelve?

**Megan:** Yeah, that's correct. I remember my very first task was doing membership. I was very concerned about handling money and the membership cards. I was really nervous and I remember keeping everything super organized and being overly polite to everybody. 'Cause, you know, it's scary.

**John and Todd:** [laugh]

**Megan:** There were so many people there that I really admired and to see people doing things themselves; I found it to be very inspiring. And, it was also a really welcoming community.

**Todd:** What year was this?

**Megan:** I'm trying to do the math.

**Megan:** '95 or '96.

**Todd:** So people all across the country have heard of Green Day. This is post the whole Lookout explosion?

**Megan:** Oh, totally. I did other things, like working





SHANTY CHERYL, both photos

## I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR.

the door and side door and stuff. But when I really fell in love with volunteering there was when I got my license. I inherited my sister's Volkswagen Rabbit, which was a diesel, four-speed. Shit you not. That's when I started doing sound there and it just totally became my thing.

**John:** Five years.

**Megan:** I was climbing up ladders and fixing fuses.

**John:** You were the best sound person there.

**Megan:** ...falling off ladders. It was a lot of fun, and just hanging out with the sound people there, too. Richard the Roadie and Clayton, who was also a roadie for Fleshes, and Rachel who was head of sound then, too, was really cool. It was all part of the same family.

**John:** She (Rachel) was good, too, but everybody really wanted that rad seventeen-year-old girl, Megan, to do their sound 'cause you were really good.

**Megan:** It was very inclusive, too. I didn't feel like it was a boys' club. I definitely felt it was super supportive. And to have that sort of community was really empowering. That's why I really believe in all-ages spaces now and people having the space to volunteer and learn how to do sound and fuck up. You know, that's okay. As long as you're trying. If you're not trying, that's kind of a problem.

**Todd:** Professionalism is a little overrated, I would say.

**Megan:** Right, but when people are learning, that's how they become better engineers.

**Todd:** Absolutely, when they're not completely shut down, too.

**Megan:** Exactly—especially younger kids.

**Todd:** John you had a little bit of a different experience at the beginning with Gilman.

**John:** For sure. It was a little earlier. I'm a little older. What happened was I was involved in Gilman as a teen and was really into the shows. I'd go see bands like Born Against, Rorschach, Filth, and Blatz. The bands that I really loved at that point—and Green Day, who is from my hometown. They were hometown heroes. They were great. I was a kid and I was stoked. Then, after they blew up, Rancid and The Offspring started building, and the whole thing changed.

The wagons were circled by *Maximum* and by Gilman; by Tim Yo(hannan) and the like. It got a little complicated because I was always into the idea of punk being a bigger tent, musically. I liked there being a certain set of ethics; the idea of there being certain ideals and concepts; a certain kind of irreverence that was completely endemic to it. "You know it when you see it," type of thing. That changed. What happened at Gilman for a little period there, especially from '93 to '95, it became very hardcore oriented and very rigid. It was ironic because they were doing

this in an attempt to avoid bands that they thought were trying to use Gilman as some sort of stepping stone.

**Todd:** Carpetbaggers.

**John:** And it ended up encouraging a lot of bands to use Gilman as a stepping stone because they were copying the bands that were there all along.

**Todd:** Instead of taking—how I'd interpret—the spirit of the first wave of punk rock, where you have Wipers and Avengers. Big Boys and Dead Kennedys. Where it's all over the place.


**John:** Butthole Surfers. I dis-involved myself with Gilman for a few years and started—as a kid still, with a bunch of other buddies of mine (we were all teenagers)—the Geek Fest thing, which was to be a counterbalance. We booked everybody who wanted to play. It was all free and all-ages and long, all-day shows.

Eventually, as that changed into its own weird thing and kept growing, we came back to Gilman because Gilman was still a community resource and it was open to people who would show up and go to the meetings and be involved in that. That's how it swung. By the time we came back, when people like Megan were working there, there were more kids who were open to a more interesting and broad spectrum of punk again.

**Todd:** You can say "weirdo." That's fine.

**John:** Weirdo music. They were just open to





**MEGAN: WE  
HAVE A MISSION.  
WE HAVE THINGS  
TO DO.**

**JOHN: AND  
TO SAY.**

EL DIABLO: both photos



what we were doing, so I started booking at Gilman in the late '90s.

**Megan:** I remember Johnny booking—probably around the same time as Dan Wrysinski—the booking got so varied, which was awesome. There were a lot of lady nights. Queer, posi-lady bands from San Francisco started playing there again more and making it their home.

**John:** And those bands had been excluded for awhile.

**Megan:** And there were zine days. I remember an art show. All sorts of really interesting stuff was happening around that time.

**John:** The truth is, too, there were still great shows happening there, even during that time when it was kind of rough. I would still go there and see shows periodically. It's always been a really valuable thing. I can understand how in other communities the Gilman model is something to really emulate because it's a pretty impressive thing. We're definitely from that culture.

**Todd:** In Los Angeles, the hard thing is that property values are so expensive. It's also expensive. Also, there are ten concurrent levels of punk rock here. They don't overlap perfectly and they're hard to find. And, any citizen can complain about a place and the cops come and shut it down.

**Megan:** Decentralized.

**Todd:** And there are other places that were doing all-ages punk and something not great happened. Slim-to-none punk bookings. They do have good stuff there once in awhile, but it's few and far between.

**John:** There's a lot of good things coming out of this region.

**Todd:** No doubt, but it's lacking centralized locations to see all-age shows. It's overwhelmingly difficult. A lot of people have tried and a lot of people have made really great attempts at it.

**John:** It was nice to be able to come into a nurturing environment like that and it probably allows us to feel the musical freedom to do the weird bullshit that we're playing. We don't really feel constrained by much, stylistically.

**Megan:** Not just musically, but also it helped us define our vision of what punk means because I think a lot of people might see it as something that they can outgrow. "Well, that's what I used to do when I was wild and crazy." But I believe in the type of punk that you can grow old with and you can do all sorts of things. You can get married. You can have a family. Just as an example, when we were just in Bloomington for Plan-It-X Fest, we saw our friend Hannah, who played for the Sissies, The Devil Is Electric, and Ghost Mice. She has a baby.

**John:** Beautiful baby.

**Megan:** And there she is at the show, taking her kid to the show. Getting on stage and playing. It means a lot to me to see things like that. We can grow together. Punk can grow with you and you can grow with it. I think Gilman definitely taught that to me, too.

**John:** Multi-generational.

**Megan:** The people who were teaching me sound were in their thirties at that time and I didn't want to trust anyone over twenty-three.

**Todd:** I think that's very important. It's funny when you say punk is a "lifestyle," meaning something to carry through your life, not as "lifestyle" branding.

**John:** Definitely a different thing.

**Todd:** That's what is so hard when you're going against large corporations. They've taken a lot of the lexicon away. You have to tell people, "My 'lifestyle' doesn't mean that I'm going to grow out of this. It's not something I'm going to buy every piece of from somebody else. It's, 'I'm going to invest in myself.'"

**John:** You can be an anthropologist about it and say it's a lifeway. Lifeways are cultural expressions of things that are manifestations of specific cultural types. There are things that go along with this that are specific lifeways. Punk has rules. People can say, "I do whatever I want, and it's punk." Not exactly.

**Todd:** Otherwise it would have a different name.

**John:** There are things—maybe they're not set in stone and they're always up for debate by a million different people—but I think the rules that I associate with it are awesome.

**Todd:** I think that you can really thrive with limitations. You can really thrive as a two-piece. It's like knowing grammar. You know what the limitations are and you can expand them.

**John:** It really allows us to feel really free, actually. Even within the format of having just bass and drums and two vocals, we really don't think, "Okay, we can't do this."

**Megan:** Nobody's expecting anything.

**John:** And we're not expecting anything specific out of each other with it. It's just that we know what we're gonna like and when we get there, it's going to happen. Sometimes it's totally by accident. Sometimes it's a little more deliberate. In general, it ends up sounding like us. It ends up making sense with our overall aesthetic that we have as part of the way our brain works as a band.

**Megan:** Style. Yeah.

**Todd:** The only thing that your friends would expect is they don't want you to fail.

**Megan:** [laughs] That's encouraging.

**John:** I like that attitude.

**Todd:** It's not a competition but everybody's challenging themselves.

**Megan:** I've definitely become a better drummer from being able to have the limitations of singing while playing. But also not playing with a guitarist. Also trying to think of melodies that could be done percussively. Is that a word? Percussively.

**John:** Absolutely. You play a lot of melodies on the drums. It's a really interesting challenge to try to fill that sonic space as much as possible. It's really fun.

**Todd:** The Street Eaters are very spatial to me. Instead of verse/chorus. Very good driving around music...

**Megan:** ...in space.

**John:** We do try to keep it driving. That's a really important thing. If there's any more defined part of the aesthetic that can be put into words, we definitely want to keep it—I hesitate to say staccato—but it's driving. It doesn't really lope into the grooving territory.

**Todd:** No noodling.

**John:** We try to keep the parts pretty deliberate and it's all pretty well gridded out. When we're playing the songs and we're writing them, we get an idea of where we want them to go. We're like, "Okay, this makes sense with this and has to keep the whole drive of the song going; the energy and the progression of it should be consistent and make you feel like you're going someplace." Not meandering.

**Todd:** Not in circles.

**Megan:** We have a mission. We have things to do.

**John:** And to say.

**Adrian:** Could you talk at all about how your scientific practice is incorporated in your art—or whether or not it is?

**John:** [to Megan] You have a scientific practice of sound. (Megan is a sound engineer.)

**Megan:** That's true. I was thinking, "Hmm. Chemistry. Biology."

[laughter]

**Megan:** "Do we dissect things?" I have such a fascination with sound. That comes into play in music, especially doing different, weird textures. We're also playing with dynamics. Also how tempo can change things, too. How you can use that when you're writing songs.

**John:** Absolutely. And filling in the space, too.

**Megan:** Is that scientific, though? I don't know.

**John:** The science I have going on in my life is around anthropology and archaeological writing and research and work. It definitely informs the lyrics. It's difficult for me to really quantify specifically how it gets in there, but it's a way of thinking and we both share it. We both went to college. Megan was kind of dragged with me by my going to college late, as I did in my early thirties, by getting fascinated by school again. Maybe more so than some people are in their early twenties. So I think we both have some anthropological thinking going on.

**Megan:** When we write songs, I think we come up with some sort of theme that we know some facts about, hopefully.

**John:** Do some research.

**Megan:** And then, with a lot of songs, I think they're character songs, where we try to imagine what someone in that situation would be thinking.


**Todd:** Or some *thing*. I'm thinking of the bald eagle song.

**John:** Our heavy-handed metaphor.

**Todd:** Well, explain that. I remember there was a large fight about what our national bird would be. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey so bad. He espoused all of the virtues of the turkey. His opponents said, "We need a proud bird. We need a strong symbol." Basically, he called the bald eagle a fair-headed vulture.

**John:** That's exactly it. He's right. We do a lot of observing of nature in our travels.





**WE'RE OBVIOUSLY  
NOT DOING THIS FOR  
MONEY OR ANY SORT  
OF WEIRD DEFERRED  
GLORY. WE'RE JUST  
LIVING IN THE MOMENT.**

SHANTY CHERYL

**Megan:** And human nature.

**John:** Human nature and nature nature and how they intersect. And the bald eagle, we found out, tends to be a really opportunistic predator and scavenger that will frequently steal from smaller birds. It's a very large bird. It will steal from ospreys that work their asses off to go and do these incredible aerial maneuvers, diving for fish. And the bald eagle will just go and snatch it from the osprey's nest or from its claws, muscle it away. It's a bird. This is nature. But, the metaphor within it, the opportunistic attitude that's affected by this bird, that's part of its instinct. That's how it's supposed to be, but we're supposed to be able to go beyond that.

**Megan:** We're trying to say that it isn't human nature just because something exists in nature—to be an asshole—it doesn't have to be part of human nature. We're beyond that.

**John:** Absolutely. We're supposed to be. Or at least make an effort to.

**Todd:** Science.

**Megan:** That's science. Observation. Hypothesis. Experimentation. Conclusion. Bam!

[laughter]

**Todd:** You guys recorded a song at the Women's Audio Mission?

**Megan:** Three of them.

**Todd:** They're a non-profit organization. What's their mission?

**Megan:** It's run by this lady Terri Winston who was involved in music for a really long time, all throughout the '90s. She wanted

to start a non-profit that would encourage women to get involved with recording arts. It's a non-profit run studio in San Francisco in the Mission, which is basically run on grant funding. She writes a bunch of grants and gets funding. I think our recording was funded by the California Arts Council. It's cool that they're pulling from the community at large to further this radical mission, which is to get more women involved.

**Todd:** The statistic is five percent of audio engineers are women.

**John:** It's a serious boys' club.

**Megan:** We talked to her about it, too, because I've done recording and stuff, mostly live engineering. Her whole thing is trying to get women to stay with it. So many women are good at it. It's just a matter of sticking with it and pursuing goals within sound arts.

**John:** And having to get beyond the fact that they might have to deal with systemic discrimination. It's a problem. We did three songs there and we're really, really happy with them. The rest of the songs on the album that we're also really happy with were with Matt Waters, who's kind of our main engineer. We love working with him. He did *We See Monsters* as well.

**Megan:** Both of those experiences were really great. Recording in a fancy studio was a new experience for us. We're used to recording more guerilla style because the way Matt Waters does it with us—which works for us. He has a portable recording

setup and all of his mics and everything. He records us in different spaces, where we can find a place. So, for us, to be in a quote/unquote "studio," was very like, "I guess we've gotta conform to what's going on here." But it was neat because they were experimenting and trying different things. We were used to doing things the way we're used to doing them, so it was cool working with some ladies who were trying to invent some cool, new sounds for us.

**John:** Absolutely. They were a little shocked at our pace of recording.

**Megan:** Oh, we're fast. "Next."

**John:** They're like, "Oh, we're used to doing one song a day, then mixing one song a day." And we're like, "Oh. No, that's not how we work."

**Megan:** Three days total.

**Todd:** "I've got runner's legs, lady."

[laughter]

**John:** "Let's do this." Get in. Do it. Get out.

**Adrian:** Megan, do you have any words of wisdom for women trying to learn to play drums?

**Megan:** Just make the space and the time. Also, playing by yourself sucks. No one likes to practice by themselves. Of course, it might be hard at first trying to figure out your first beats. You might want some privacy for that because it can be a train wreck, but it's way more fun if you find people to play with. If you form a band then you're going to force yourself to get better and write songs. It's a lot more fun.



It's supposed to be fun. It's not supposed to be terrible and oppressive. Although, drums can be dangerous. I have lots of cuts all over my hands. You can hit things—like your eyeballs—out. So you have to use caution.

**Adrian:** Very wise.

**John:** Reduce the violence.

**Todd:** And you have to be strong. Drummers have to lug all of their stuff. The cymbal cases are heavy.

**Megan:** It's funny 'cause the show we played last night in Pedro, this lady at the bar was like, "You got such wimpy little arms. How did you hit those drums so hard?" "Well, you know, it's all how you throw your weight."

**John:** Then Megan flexed, and she went, "Oooh."

**Megan:** Zing. I'm a petite lady, but I play with really big sticks so I get a lot of volume out of the drums. The harder you hit the drums—not the cymbals—the better off you are.

**Todd:** The non-shiny things?

**Megan:** Yes, those ones.

**John:** She gives herself whiplash sometimes from just rockin' too hard.

**Megan:** That's only in bands where I end up not having to sing.

**Adrian:** As far as playing shows, do you have any preference between house shows, bars, venues, or outdoors?

**Megan:** Well, we've played those all. I think it just depends on who's there.

**John:** That's really it.

**Megan:** As long as there are people who are there to enjoy the bands and have a good time, that's the show I want to play.

**John:** And people who get what the bands are about, are conscious about what's happening. For us, it helps a little bit when it's not everybody being so wasted that they're spitting all over the place, falling around.

**Megan:** Knocking into you.

**Todd:** You're incidental at that point.

**John:** We're a little more cerebral. We like to get wild, of course. We're wild-ass people, but it's nice to have people still be able to see single, so maybe they can read the lyric sheets. That can happen in just about any of those spaces. Ideally, it's nice to play a really well run DIY space that knows how to make things work and can take care of touring bands and can do things outside of the booze-slugging spectrum. That's nice.

**Todd:** How did you guys end up playing a landfill in Albany?

**John:** That was for Paul Curran and Ariel Awesome's wedding reception.

**Megan:** That's when we had two songs. We'd just started. You can kind of notice from the video that you're talking about that I'm actually playing on a hubcap that I found in a bush. The rest of those drums, we carried out on a dolly, two miles out on this little path.

**John:** And I used Steve from Onion Flavored Rings' little battery-powered amp. We just sang.

**Megan:** Everything's propped up by boulders that we found laying around.

**John:** It was pretty decent. It was a good time.

**Megan:** We've played some shows that might feel alienating in the sense that we

were on a bigger stage that we weren't used to, with monitors and things like that. We couldn't really see the audience.

**John:** Lights are really bright.

**Megan:** I really had to trip myself out to think, "Okay, Johnny and I are here and we're going to feed off of each other."

**Todd:** You're blinded.

**Megan:** You have to look for something to feed off of. In a way, that was kind of a mind trip, too, because it's like, "Oh, hello. I'm playing with you."

**John:** Then again, it's also nice to hear the vocals.

**Todd:** Going to shows for well over twenty years now, when there are a lot of people who want to see a band, I actually enjoy that the band's raised up because the people in the back can see them. Shorter people can see them.

**John:** That is a plus.

**Todd:** There's a little give and a take. In a perfect world, everybody would be the same height. Bands would play in the middle, in the round, in a circle. That'd be perfect. We don't live in that world, but it's interesting to have those variances. Instead of, "I'm uncomfortable. I'm giving up." You're like, "How can I get out of this trippiness right now and have other people enjoy what we're doing also?"

**John:** There are a lot of different aspects and different ways to do that, for sure.

**Megan:** Either way, to get yourself out of yourself in the moment.

**Todd:** I always try to think of things from other people's perspectives, too, even spatially. This is more of a personal question. John, did you become sober recently-ish?

**John:** Yeah. I did. A little over three years ago.

**Todd:** What precipitated that?

**John:** It was a very uncomfortable, powerful, and sad situation. It involved a very sad moment where I did something awful and violent towards the person I love the most in the world, who is sitting right next to me. I had to completely re-assess my entire way of thinking and doing things. It came from a place that I didn't want to be and a person I didn't want to be and I realized that I had become that person. I had to just completely change the way I thought, and I haven't really looked back.

**Megan:** We wrote a song about it.

**Todd:** One of the hardest things to come to grips with is if you are slipping. Even if it's unintentional.

**John:** Absolutely.

**Todd:** The good news is—in this case, I believe—everybody is coming out stronger.

**Megan:** That can happen.

**John:** With a hell of a lot of work.

**Megan:** It's hard for everybody.

**Todd:** But there's a definite power to being stripped down for the right reasons, then being built back up.

**John:** There is a lot of challenge with it, because there was also coming to grips with the fact that there's so many things that people don't necessarily think about. The fact that there were all of these weird things in the aftermath, like realizing that people

were more inclined to try to comfort me as an insane—and suddenly abusive—human being, than to necessarily be there for the person who I put through this, who did nothing to bring it on to herself. Realizing that. It's really important to realize it and to understand that these are also systemic aspects of the problems that are all wrapped up in this violence that we have to confront.

**Megan:** It was really weird because I also had to come to terms with, "Okay, this abuse is not what I want in my life." I had to basically draw that line myself, which was really hard for me. John needed to figure his own stuff out, but I needed to figure my own problems out, too. It was really interesting how a lot of people in our community wanted to go and run to John and say, "Oh, he's having a really hard time." And, "Megan kicked him out." It's like, "Hey, how about, 'Wow, she's so strong in standing up for herself and also believes in a real relationship that can be a lot stronger.'" And I think that from that point forward, we both treated each other with a lot of respect and understanding and knew that we both had a lot of growing to do.

**John:** The fact that you unambiguously drew that line was probably the primary reason why I was able to actually maintain the strength to not go back to that way of thinking that had crept into me through addiction and insanity. It's very much a two-person operation. Yeah, it was hard. It still is hard. It'll always be hard.

**Todd:** Not intended to be disrespectful. If it's not hard, it's usually not worth it.

**John:** That's not disrespectful.

**Todd:** You actually get to see the beauty of things, too.

**Megan:** Definitely.

**John:** Although, I wish it had never happened and I wish that I had never gotten to that point. I never want to get anywhere near that point again. Becoming sober was just the first step.

**Megan:** Also, me having to learn how to stand up for myself was a really big thing, too.

**Adrian:** Do you guys have any advice for couples who want to start a band together?

**Megan:** Just be punk and have fun. It can just be a cover band for all anyone cares. You don't have to necessarily both know how to play your instruments. No one's trying to get fancy here. Have fun. It doesn't matter.

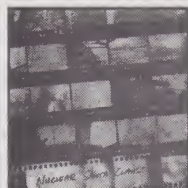
**John:** Enjoy the intimacy of it because the intimacy is kind of amazing. We realized just in the last week, "Holy crap. We've been on the road with each other for a month. It's mainly just been us and long drives in the truck. And we're having the time of our lives."

**Megan:** It's been so awesome. It's really cool.

**John:** Even with having an awful car accident that could have been physically very damaging, but didn't—just fiscally damaging. Even with the disasters and the down moments, it's just the amount of intimacy and the amount of love that can come from it, really is pretty powerful. It can build on something and make it into something that you would never even imagine.

**Megan:** I think we also realized how connected we are to our communities. Both of us have done a lot of touring

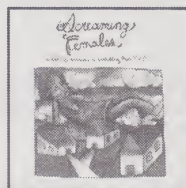




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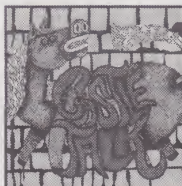
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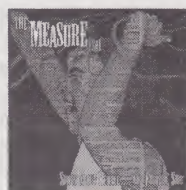
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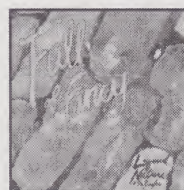
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separately, and so we have a lot of common friends in different places. To be able to go places together and share that is really cool. We're basically driving around and hanging out with our buddies. It's awesome. It's a lot of work though, and not a vacation. It's really fun.

**John:** It is. And it's a sweet counterbalance to the idea of retreating off by yourselves and hiding away from everybody, which is also really fun sometimes. But it's also really nice to share something that you're creating as a couple and as people who have a mind meld in what you're doing. And bringing that out to people and allowing them into that. Also asking about their worlds and being a part of their worlds as well. It's really nice.

An American thing that happens is that people tend to get into the nuclear family and isolate themselves from their communities, from their friends, from their former associates, from ideological allies. And we're pretty staunchly against that. This is one really good way of doing that. Also the fact that we are also very frank in our lyrics about personal and political issues that we care about and things that are both meta and personal. And, often times, connecting them together. We just want to have dialogue with people whose minds we respect and who are worth having dialogue with, which is a hell of a lot of people.

**Megan:** I want to see the world, too. To be able to travel together. One of the reasons we wanted to start a two-piece band was that it would be easier to travel. We wouldn't have to get a van. The truck that broke down was great because it was a two-seater. It was easier on the gas mileage. When we first started playing, we just had a little, tiny 1990 Toyota Corolla. By design, we just wanted to do something that would make it easy for us to travel and play music.

**Todd:** Be economic about it.

**Megan:** Also the logistics of it. "Hey, you want to have practice?" "Okay."

**John:** It's really nice to be compact. There's less compromise. There's less hashing things out. We hash it out a little bit amongst each other, and there we go. There's nobody sitting in the corner being passive aggressive.

[laughter]

**Megan:** Very much engaged.

**Adrian:** This is from Daryl. Did you spend your one-year anniversary on tour?

**John:** Sure did.

**Megan:** Yep!

[laughter]

**John:** At Plan-It-X Fest.

**Megan:** It was our special day. We were just really excited to spend that anniversary doing what we like doing on the road with a bunch of friends being there for us. It was perfect. It was pretty rad to just be surrounded by community and people we care about.

**John:** And some great bands that we really like.

**Megan:** It was fun. It was our definition of romance. We reclaimed that. That's how

# I BELIEVE IN THE TYPE OF PUNK THAT YOU CAN GROW OLD WITH AND YOU CAN DO ALL SORTS OF THINGS.

we wanted it to be. And, you know what? A day like that IS about us, so that's what we wanted to do.

**John:** Not to say that next year we won't spend it on some deserted island.

**Megan:** We're going to do what we want, when we want, where we want to.

[laughter]

**Adrian:** Congratulations.

**Todd:** How do you retain the level of desperation and still balance it out with hope? Either as people, or, specifically, people making music.

**John:** Is it desperation or urgency? That's the question.

**Megan:** The need.

**John:** Because I don't know that I feel desperate at this point in my life, but I definitely feel an urgency that is really, really important. I feel sharper than maybe I ever have and the need to express the thoughts that I have and that we have together [turning to Megan]—and that you have and help you express the thoughts that you have—there's just a drive to do that that I can't put a cap on. I guess there's a desperation in that, but I think it's much more. It's a necessity.

**Todd:** That sounds positive and post-addiction. Just an observation.

**Megan:** Fair enough.

**Todd:** What I was thinking about is that certain bands, after they have been bands for awhile and they do a reunion, the desperation's gone.

**Megan:** They've said what they've wanted to say.

**Todd:** And they've hit a plateau and you can see them deal with it either really beautifully or not deal with it at all. We've seen people become parodies of themselves.

**John:** A lot of that's for money. We're obviously not doing this for money or any sort of weird deferred glory. We're just living in the moment.

**Todd:** There's a lot to be said—my whole goal is self-sustainability. I don't want to be shit-bag in debt on anything, but if we can keep Razorcake going, sewing seeds slowly, fantastic.

**Megan:** That's why we try and be efficient with our touring. We make a lot of our own merch. I silkscreen all of our shirts, and I design all the artwork. John does the layout and the videos. Those things help us along the way. We also appreciate it

when people do buy our stuff when we're on the road because it helps us get to the next town. When other touring bands come into town, we reciprocate. That's how community builds. That's the hope that we maintain; that there's a community that's supportive to allow people to continue making art and music and expressing themselves and helping each other. We feel compelled to be playing music and to leave town to do it.

**John:** And to produce all the art and all of the different aspects of it and pull them together. Maybe little bits of this is us being a little bit of control freaks over our own expression, but we like to have it streamlined and we like to have it come out the way we want it.

**Todd:** At this point, why do it any other way?

**Megan:** I love it. Every other band I've been in—and I love the bands I've been in—but just the dynamic of being with four other people or so when it comes time to name a song or "What's our band going to be called?" Or, "Who's going to do the artwork for this record?" And we're all punks and communist-minded people, so we want everyone to have their own voice and anyone can veto anything, but it's really hard to get anything done. In this band, at first, and you can tell from the progression of artwork that I've done for our records, I was afraid to make any art that had myself in it because I was like, "What if John doesn't like this or these other people who don't exist." I was just afraid of pissing someone off. It took me a minute to be like, "Oh, wait. He likes what I do. That's okay."

**John:** You're a skilled artist with really good vision and you've been doing it for a really long time.

**Megan:** And I wasn't stepping on anyone's toes 'cause there's two of us and this guy over here likes what I'm doing, so what's there to hold me back? That's been really liberating. I love making art and I haven't really been able to do that for other bands. I'm starting to do it a little bit in Wild Assumptions, too. It's exciting to come out of my shell with that, to do some art.

**John:** It's really nice. I'm glad you have.

**Megan:** It's fun.



RAZORCAKE 55



# THE GATEWAY DISTRICT



Interview by Todd Taylor

Photos by Rachel Murray and El Diablo

Layout by Lauren Measure





RACHEL MURRAY

Sometimes, I have no idea why a band strikes a chord with me. No idea. They just do and I don't want to dissect it. I just want to listen to the record and keep playing it while other records fade into the further reaches of my collection.

A simple needle scratching and bumping along a groove in a piece of vinyl can be a mysterious thing.

The Gateway District is a collaboration between four Midwestern musicians, all of whom I'm familiar with on vinyl. Three of them in the flesh. I met Maren somewhere around 2002 in a bowling alley. We were introduced by way of a 7" handshake and "We're in a new band called the Soviettes." I met Brad in 2001 when he played in Rivethead and I was touring with Tiltwheel. Paddy from Dillinger Four introduced us with nicknames we're still trying to live down a decade later. Dave Strait—Gateway's

touring guitarist—and I've shared front yards and homemade Fast Crowd pizzas when he's come through with The Slow Death. Nate Gangelhoff, the guitarist on the records, I consider a fellow brother-in-zines and independent publishing. The only person in Gateway I hadn't met before they crossed our threshold was Carrie, who I was familiar with from the Salteens track on the *No Slow... All Go!* comp.

Whoah, bro, you just dropped a lot of names. But it's not like that. It's much more casual, like a big, loose-knit family; like distant relatives or cousins visiting from Middle America. I just happen to think that they're talented musicians who've been in some great bands over the years. I've always enjoyed their company when our paths have crossed. I also review a lot of records, so it feels like I've been talking to them for a while.



In 2006, The Gateway District sent in their debut 7". They had stenciled the packaging—a paper grocery bag—with sea creatures. A crab. A bird's talons descending. A West Coast lobster-looking thing (Pacific lobsters don't have claws.). I carefully unwrapped the packaging and tacked it up on the wall of HQ. The 7" was promising; it felt like a musical post card. I've always enjoyed Maren's voice: smoky, sure, and resonant.

2009 saw their first full-length, *Some Days You Get the Thunder*. It's a strong debut. The country-tinged songs are a little jarring on the first couple of spins. Like any record that you trust, those

tracks stick out less and less when you give in and just... just enjoy the record all the way through. It's like having a dog in the truck, digging the drive. A great companion.

Long ago, I gave up complaining "Why isn't this band larger? If things were different, they'd be huge." Now, I just want to hear the best a band has to offer, and this year I was rewarded with *Perfect's Gonna Fail*. It's in there that the Gateway District fully gels and totally shines with powerful vocal interplay between Maren and Carrie; the non-ass, unpretentious poetry of three gifted songwriters; and tight melodies and notes that linger far

after the tone arm's popped off of the dead wax and returned to its holder. I don't know why I get mildly bent when they're called pop punk because I just hear punk. Sure, it's easy on the ears and leagues away from grindcore or thrash, but I hear something deeper than poppy, candy veneer.

I hear both the wrecking balls destroying a city and beautiful echoes exploring their collective pasts.

**Maren Mocosko:** guitar, singer  
**Carrie Bleser:** bass, singer  
**Dave Strait:** backup guitar on tour  
**Brad Lokkesmoe:** drums

**Todd:** You guys are named the Gateway District after a very specific thing. What is that specific thing?

**Brad:** I was really obsessed with old Minneapolis history for a long time and stumbled upon a guy named Edwin Hirschhoff who took a lot of photos for various newspapers and magazines. In his spare time, he was taking pictures of the skid row district that existed on Washington Avenue. Over time, some of those photos started making their way into different publications. Mostly, after he died, his relatives gave them to a few different people who were interested. Then there was the *Down and Out* book that came out that one guy (Joseph Hart) used all of his photographs and then wrote a narrative about that part of Minneapolis to coincide with the photos. That, and a book called *The Other Minneapolis*, (David L. Rosheim) which is specifically about just the Gateway District area and its demise. It was in a period of Minneapolis when they tore down everything, to rebuild what they thought was a shitty part of town. They thought if they just tore it all down, poverty would go away—flop houses would go away—which is obviously ridiculous. They tore down a lot of really cool, old buildings during that time. They tore down a building called the Metropolitan Building in Minneapolis, which was this insanely awesome piece of architecture.

**Todd:** It had glass floors.

**Brad:** It had glass floors, so it was naturally lit all day. They didn't have to use lights in any of the offices, which is really fucking cool. They demolished that. There was an interview with a janitor from—they called it The Met—in one of the old Minneapolis documentaries and he talks about how he worked for however many years, just as a janitor, and he was so upset by it that he was not able to watch them demolish it.

"There's no fuckin' way I'm going to watch that happen." That speaks volumes when a janitor says that about a building that he worked at. So, the Edwin Hirschhoff thing was the lead-in for me to get obsessed with that area and when we started a band, it was, "Oh, that seems like a cool reference for a band name."

**Todd:** Why, though? Why have the destruction of a large area be the name of a band?

**Brad:** I liked how the words work as a band name and I like band names that are fine on their own, but if you dig in a little deeper it leads people to something that is at least interesting rather than nonsense.

**Maren:** My understanding, too—another reason why they tore it down was what they used to call "grift" in Minneapolis. Even when my parents moved to Minneapolis in the '70s, it was still known as grift—bribes to city politicians. One thing that I've heard, too, is that it could make people's businesses rich by tearing things down and building them back. It was this idea that, "Well, it's got a lot of crime and poverty and prostitution and alcoholism." And it was where the migrant workers—who were really important for getting food from the Midwestern farms to the rest of the nation—lived during that time. Before that, that was where migrants would get off the trains. They would wait until the harvest came in and then they would go to the harvest.

There were a lot of people who were migrants and they had hotels that were chicken wire cages. As it got into the '50s and '60s, those became less and less about migrant workers doing the harvest and more about the homeless. Besides, they thought, "We can clean up the area and get rid of this sort of skid row where there are all of these social problems. We'll just tear it down." It's also because people could make a profit from it.

**Brad:** As far as another reason for the band name, why name it that—something about what happened to that area of that town and the people who lived in it, definitely coincides with punk rock to me in a lot of ways. So it seemed fitting because of that.

**Todd:** What is it the gateway to?

**Maren:** It was the gateway to the Mississippi. The name, The Gateway District, came from the city when it was first starting and it was welcoming you, the Midwest, to the Mississippi River.

**Todd:** They actually had a motto. "The Gateway: More Than Her Arms, the City Opens Her Heart to You. 'The Gateway District.'"

**Maren:** Kind of ironic.

**Todd:** It's kind of like when they make a new subdivision or a new district in Los Angeles, they try to make it sound nicer.

**Carrie:** It has to be enticing.

**Todd:** "The Gateway District" sounds very nice. What they were trying to do is restore status to the city. By 1957, your mayor was saying "There's blight. We need to take it out." The thing that's interesting with the Gateway District is how severely the city took the tooth out. It almost broke the jaw of Minneapolis. It's not just like taking out a couple of businesses or a couple of flop houses.

**Maren:** They leveled it.

**Todd:** Do you know how many city blocks and buildings they took out?

**Maren:** Thirty square blocks. A five by six section of the city in downtown Minneapolis and there's hardly anything that's left. There's a fountain, a flagpole, and one building that they've moved. The fountain got moved to South Minneapolis into a park, The flagpole got moved. Even the building got moved. When I was a young teenager, I remember the opera house was always up on concrete blocks. It was in the parking lot across from First Avenue, which is a big venue. That was





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the one building that they saved from the Gateway District. It was a mess. It sat there on blocks from the '50s to the early '90s, until they finally moved it down the block. Now there it is.

**Brad:** Going to shows at First Avenue as a teenager, that building sat right across from it and was just always a place that was covered in flyers. Wheatpasted. That was the main purpose it ended up serving for many years. Promote shitty rock shows.

**Maren:** It was in this empty lot and they hemmed and hawed for years about what to do with that block. Block E. Now there's a Hard Rock Café there and some mall.

**Todd:** I think the name is very apt for you guys, too. I'm thinking of music in a larger context. You guys have all been in previous bands. Your bands—if you had chose to do it, through various things—could have been more popular, bigger. Rivethead was popular. Soviettes. But you decided to start a new band. Why is that?

**Maren:** Well, the Soviettes kinda broke up.

**Brad:** I like punk bands having a finite amount of existence. There have been some great bands that have been playing for forty years and still play. Like the Zero Boys. They're still fuckin' good. With some

**"THEY ACTUALLY HAD A MOTTO.  
"THE GATEWAY: MORE THAN HER ARMS,  
THE CITY OPENS HER HEART TO YOU.  
'THE GATEWAY DISTRICT.'"**

bands, once something changes enough with members or something like that, you should end it and not just carry on with that name because people already know it when it's clearly a really fuckin' different thing. But also Rivethead broke up. There was a span of time between that and being in any other band. It would have been ridiculous to use that name still.

**Todd:** So, I'm going to do actual quotes about the Gateway District and you can interpret them any way you want to. "It was the greatest act of altruistic vandalism in the city's history." That's talking about the government officials tearing down the

Gateway District. What is the most altruistic act of vandalism that you have committed, as a person or as a band?

**Dave:** I'm vandalizing all of Nate Gangelhoff's carefully written and well-crafted and played guitar parts on the records. Just so we need... two guitars.

**Carrie:** Instead of just one.

**Dave:** I don't really know what difference I'm making. All I know is that I'm ruining what he did. [laughter]

**Maren:** But it's for the greater good, because here we are as a four piece.

**Brad:** At some point in Rivethead days, Nate had a friend who was a quote/unquote artist



# IT'S THE TRANSITION BETWEEN YOUNG AND IDEALISTIC AND BEING OLD AND REALISTIC

that wanted to paint his bass guitar for him. I have no idea why, because Nate's a really smart dude, but he let him do it. It came back and it had this psychedelic scene of mushrooms [laughter] and various things all over his bass, which was fuckin' hilarious.

**Carrie:** It's hilarious on its own, but when you're Nate...

**Brad:** It was already fucked, but then me and Zack took it one day and decided to roll it over with house paint and wrote in giant black paint, "I Let the Dogs Out." So he had to play it like that for a long time.

**Carrie:** I like to make grammatical corrections of graffiti in bathrooms. Red pen is the best. When they say "Dat pussy." No, "That."

**Todd:** I have some quiz questions from the Gateway District itself. They destroyed two hundred buildings within a year's time. What did most of those places get replaced with in the first four years? What was their great idea?

**Brad:** I know that this was insult to injury and they got rid of low-rent housing and put something that just throws in the face of it. I can't remember what—financial stuff or expensive housing.

**Todd:** Parking lots.

**Dave and Maren:** I was going to say parking lots.

**Todd:** Seventy percent of the land that they razed became parking lots. That's their great idea. It's a product of the industrial revolution. More people are driving cars. Fucked up.

**Maren:** They did the thing, too, where they ripped out the trolleys. That was, specifically—there's a guy connected to it, where it was his road paving construction. He had the politicians in his pockets. So that could have been part of it, too.

**Todd:** What's fucking with me is that I think of Minneapolis as much nicer than Los Angeles. More dignified. Like Canada South.

**Carrie:** It's less dirty. It's not as big, so it is cleaner.

**Maren:** There is always an effort to have a lot of parks in Minneapolis. It's in our city constitution that ninety percent of waterfront has to be publicly-owned. Every neighborhood has to have X amount of green space. In that sense, at least when I lived out here (San Pedro), I missed the green space. But, which part of L.A.?

**Todd:** I heard a really good quote (Patton Oswalt), which I'll butcher: "L.A. is the best four cities in the world and the worst six, combined." Simultaneously.

**Carrie:** It represents so much. It's not one thing.

**Todd:** Two blocks over (from Highland Park), it's a different town from us (Pasadena).

**Maren:** Even Pedro, where we lived, was gorgeous. And there's not any part of Minneapolis I feel like that could touch where we lived, but less than a mile or two down the road, it was another deal. And Pedro, I feel, is pretty small.

**Todd:** Another thing about the Gateway District—when buildings actually did come back in, what large industries replaced them?

**Maren:** They put in a lot of sky scrapers. It was modern. That was the thing, to be futuristic and modern.

**Todd:** Here's a quote I found: "The future was going to be clean, technocratic, rational, and modern." That was their big play.

**Carrie:** Are there any skyscrapers in the old Gateway District?

**Brad:** The Foshay Tower was the tallest building for a long time. I don't know if you know this, but the namesake of Foshay spent time in Leavenworth prison for tax evasion and fraud. The most prominently displayed name in the city. Basically, that guy was a crazy criminal.

**Todd:** We have a way of celebrating them in America... But what replaced those buildings was abstract shit: IBM—a business selling to businesses, computers; Nation Insurance, and the Federal Reserve Bank.

**Maren:** That's right in the heart.

**Todd:** So, is that where *Perfect's Gonna Fail*, the name of the album came from?

**Maren:** No.

**Brad:** The name of album just comes from a line in one of Carrie's songs.

**Todd:** And what does that refer to, Carrie?

**Carrie:** Oh, geez. I think it's kind of a generality. If you have a rigid plan for something, it seems like failure will be inevitable when you're not flexible. Things you think are; aren't in the end. And things you know become things you don't know.

**Maren:** The whole line is "looking for perfect is gonna fail you." For me—interpreting your words for you, so please come and correct me if I'm wrong—a big part of the last four, five years and getting over stuff and getting older and hopefully a little bit smarter, but the whole idea of having expectations. It's always going to fuck you, if you have these expectations. Looking for perfect, it's going to fail you because you can't find it.

**Carrie:** It's the transition between young and idealistic and being old and realistic and how to lace in the two. How to be graceful enough to coincide what your fool's courage can throw you into and then how you can become a wiser, better person and still continue what it was you were looking for in the first place. When you start out doing something, it doesn't usually end the way you imagined it would in the beginning. That process is usually pretty difficult and you can't be tied down to the idea you had in the beginning. You just have to work with it.

**Todd:** There's an adaptability. There are many people—and I'm just doing it in a band context because I don't know you personally—instead of saying, "We're going to run this thing into the ground and keep it going. We're going to ask for top dollar every time we do a reunion show." Instead, it's, "You know what? I like these people. I want to play music with them. Want to be in a band? Let's continue doing it." It's a much more flexible, organic way of approaching music.

**Carrie:** I think that it's safe to say that that's all where we're at now. We've all been there, done that and now we don't—I don't know if any of us had lofty aspirations [laughter] as far as music goes—but when the van breaks, we don't freak. When there's nowhere to sleep, we don't freak. When we run out of money. You just can't worry about it. It takes a little time to get there, or maybe it doesn't. But you're taking that line and you're applying it to this band and I think it can be applied into a lot of places that aren't necessarily where I was when I wrote it.

**Brad:** Picking a line out of a song that was a both a cool line from one of Carrie's songs, but also got the theme of the record. That was why.

**Carrie:** It's applicable in a lot of situations.

**Maren:** I feel that the first record (*Some Days You Get the Thunder*) was kind of named that way, too. It's a line from a song that's not about the band, but it sort of encompasses what's going on.

**Carrie:** We have a "shit happens" kind of theme, don't we?

**Maren:** High hopes, low expectations.

**Todd:** What happens when you don't get the thunder? Is it lightning?

**Brad:** With that one, I always thought about it the opposite way almost entirely.

**Carrie:** Sometimes you get the sunshine?

**Brad:** When you get the thunder it's, overall, a good thing. And when you don't, which is





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most of the time, you fucking go to work. Your car runs out of gas.

**Dave:** It's a glass half empty, half full thing. Thunder is either good or bad.

**Carrie:** I actually thought it was bad.

**Maren:** No. Some days it's really real and it's all together here, and other days—actually, it's funny that you say some days it's sunny, because the next line is, "Some days you just get the drops of rain when the sun's still burning you." Ack. The sun. Sometimes, it's really coming down. Maybe that's good or maybe that's bad. I don't know. Maybe thunder is good or maybe thunder is bad. So, I guess, both of the records are named kind of that way.

**Todd:** Maren, I know you as Sturgeon. Who gave you that nickname?

**Maren:** Bob Quincy Punx, who wound up duct taped to the refrigerator door that night later on, which I believe was a New Years Eve party. It was the end of the year 1994.

**Brad:** The land before time.

**Dave:** Wow. I was fourteen.

**Maren:** And that's how it happened.

**Todd:** So, Brad, I know you as Half Pint. Who gave you that name?

**Brad:** Patrick Costello.

**Carrie:** Damn him!

**Todd:** Do you still go by Half Pint?

**Brad:** I never went by Half Pint, just a lot of people called me that. It's kind of hard to hate. I don't really give a shit.

**Todd:** When something gets stuck in my brain, it's hard for me to change it.

**Brad:** I understand that.

**Todd:** He still calls me Retodd.

**Brad:** I try not to go by that. I never put it out there on my own, by any means. It would seem ridiculous to introduce yourself as that. Well, I'm really glad that this is going into the interview. Thanks Retodd.

**Todd:** Carrie, I was going to ask you about Tennant, but you already told me not to do that.

**Carrie:** Well, that's not my name.

**Todd:** How did it get attached to your name, then?

**Carrie:** Poor, lazy journalism. They Googled the Salteens, but the only thing that came up was the Canadian ska band in the mid-'90s, and there happened to be a Carrie in that band and her name was Carrie Tennant. Whoever did the research didn't read the rest of the paragraph.

**Maren:** That said, "...this band from Canada." Which was probably in the first sentence of the article.

**Carrie:** They were like, "Oh my god, oh my god. I have twenty minutes until I get off work. Okay. Hurry up."

**Brad:** What I think is funny about that is I think you can appreciate that it's half non-lazy journalism. They dug deep enough to figure out a band that really didn't release anything that Carrie used to be in, but then didn't decide to figure out if it was the right band or get your last name.

**Todd:** They probably read the one-sheet that Adam of It's Alive sent out. "Salteens. American Monsters." I'm just guessing.

**Maren:** I think the people who started it is the *City Pages*, which is the local *Village Voice* for Minneapolis. The first time I saw it was when they reviewed our first record and I don't know if they would have gotten the one-sheet. I doubt it.

**Dave:** Adam's really good about sending those out. The (Legendary San Diego) Chargers record got reviewed in the *City Pages*.

**Carrie:** Okay. Maybe you're right, which actually makes a lot of sense because if they





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would have known anything about the band that I was in, they wouldn't have made that mistake. Who knows?

**Maren:** Carrie even sent a nice email.

**Carrie:** I sent a very sweet, little retraction because it kept happening. It was two or three different times.

**Todd:** Did you write [shows Carrie the direct quote from his notes]: "My name is Carrie Bleser [bla zer] and I play bass in the Gateway District."

**Maren:** That's good journalism.

**Carrie:** I could have been, "Listen, buddy. Blah. Blah," but I wasn't. I was very nice and I said thank you.

**Maren:** And then the next week another thing came out and it still said Carrie Tennant.

**Brad:** I don't feel comfortable covering for you anymore. That marriage you had with

**Brad:** Nate played guitar and bass on the record. Maren also played bass.

**Maren:** We played a show at the Alamo with Underground Railroad To Candyland.

**Brad:** Mike Wedel played with us for a little bit.

**Maren:** He was in Rivethead, too.

**Todd:** When did Justin of the Chinese Telephones play with you guys?

**Carrie:** He played a New York tour and an Ohio tour. He was our tour guy. He played three tours with us. But Nate can't tour. Banner Pilot is more primary for him.

**Maren:** He's got a real job... after we made the little 7", then I did move to San Pedro. Carrie and I moved there, but when we moved back, Carrie started playing bass.

**Brad:** We also played a Halloween party in San Pedro.

**Todd:** What does music give you that other things don't? Why do you continue doing it?

**Carrie:** Oh, boy.

**Todd:** You all have other jobs. You all have to make sacrifices to play music. Why do it?

**Brad:** For me, it's always been—I know this sounds really simple—it's really fun to do. It's never been a fuckin' job in any context for me, so it hasn't been ruined by some "going for it" aspect and that failing, then it having this bitter taste to it. It is also so much a part of my social life.

**Carrie:** I'd never see my friends anymore if I didn't play music.

**Brad:** You travel around. You see the same people once or twice a year. It's fuckin' awesome having friends anywhere. I pretty much replaced skateboarding with music when I was about twelve. And that took the place of what skateboarding used to do.

**Dave:** It's a good excuse to travel with our friends.

**Maren:** I was actually going to say that, too. It's so fun. And then I was thinking, but there are other things that are fun that don't do the same thing for me.

**Todd:** There's creativity involved.

**Carrie:** Release and creativity.

**Maren:** Social and there's beer. It's physical as well as mental. And, it's true. Even with the Soviettes, even though it ended so abruptly and it was such a surprise, there wasn't the idea of, "We're gonna get famous." We're doing this for a reason. There wasn't an idea—and I guess there never has been—so it's always fun. Even if there's no show or a record. Even if it's just a song that you play. In and of itself, it's so fun.

**Carrie:** Writing music is almost more than an extracurricular activity. I drink beer and play guitar in my living room as an almost day-to-day thing.

**Maren:** It is the curricular. It's not the extra.

**Carrie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's the curriculum. It's kind of become necessary. I thought to myself before, "Okay, when this gets sad and when I'm old and lame, I don't know what I'm going to do with all of these fuckin' songs." Because they just keep coming. Writing music is a big thing for me. It's what I do on a weekly basis.

**Brad:** I can't imagine not doing it. For me, if I'm standing on a ladder, painting a house, I think about songs. I can't imagine the idea of going through the life I have without that always in the back of my mind. And most of the guys I know who do the same shit as me who don't have a band or something, they're all really depressed alcoholics. They hate it. All they care about is making money and they don't make very much money. And it's sad.

**Carrie:** [in higher, cheery voice] You just need to write a song.

**Dave:** While you're on the ladder, you're saving up for tour. That's the end.

# HIGH HOPES, LOW EXPECTATIONS.

John Tennant back in the day. You're all embarrassed. [laughter]

**Carrie:** Fuck that dude.

**Brad:** You were Carrie Tennant for awhile. You played in a ska band in Canada. It's not that big of a deal. Get over it.

**Carrie:** Some things can just stay between us, Brad.

**Brad:** Apparently not. [laughter]

**Todd:** The Gateway District started with Maren...

**Maren:** And Brad.

**Todd:** 2006ish?

**Maren:** Sure. The Soviettes sorta stopped playing and that was really hard for me because it was pretty unexpected. I didn't expect to do it my whole life, but I thought maybe another year or two. Anyway, we suddenly stopped. Brad had been on tour with us for the last two, big tours.

**Brad:** I was slingin' shirts and records.

**Todd:** Merch and dice.

**Brad:** All kinds of shit.

**Maren:** Wrangling Soviettes into the van.

**Todd:** Kitten wrangling. Putting them in the box.

**Maren:** He just said, "If you ever want to play." And I had actually been playing with a friend who played violin. So, Brad and I started playing in Minneapolis and then we played with Nate and couple other people. We made a little 7" that got recorded. "Hey, you want to make a 7" tomorrow?" "Okay." It was really winging it.

**Carrie:** That was actually when I first played with you guys.

**Brad:** I played guitar and Rawl (Morales) from Pedro played drums. That one show. We had one practice at one of the houses in Pedro.

**Carrie:** Susie (Soviette) was supposed to play bass and then she got drunk and biffed it. She broke her hand. In front of Rebel's in Pedro. And I, just inadvertently, stood in. I don't really know if that's the reason.

**Maren:** No, it wasn't.

**Carrie:** That was just that show. That was just funny.

**Maren:** Again, it goes back to not really having any expectations.

**Todd:** Fluid.

**Carrie:** Fluid.

**Maren:** I'm kind of in a bad place about what is happening with my other band. I don't know what's going on, so we're just playing. At least I didn't have any expectation other than I just want to play guitar. I know I get along super well with Brad. He's an awesome drummer. We can play in his basement. All this other stuff. He's got some songs. I've got some songs. We weren't "together." We weren't a "band." We didn't break up to move to Pedro. It wasn't anything.

**Brad:** We're both two people who like to hang out and drink beer and work on songs and play music.

**Maren:** Don't have anything going on right now, so let's do it.



# IT'S NICE TO NOT HAVE GOALS. [laughter]

## BRAD: ABSOLUTELY! WE ARE GOAL-LESS.

**Maren:** Yeah, it's the reason to do a shitty day. If you love your job or hate your job, it's a great place to put that love or that hate.

**Carrie:** It's a release and it's a craft. It's a creative process that once you start doing it for awhile, you just get really used to it and it becomes important to you. I've got a handheld recorder thing that's in the center console of my car because I write so much music driving down the road.

**Maren:** She drives a lot.

**Carrie:** Lyrics in the most bizzaro places, like napkins shoved in cup holders. In the back of my lipstick-stained day planner. [laughter] Well, you have to blot. [laughter]

**Brad:** I remember being on tour and writing Zack, "This is the first time I've had to throw away lipstick-stained napkins out of a tour van."

**Carrie:** Remember when I curled my hair in the front?

**Brad:** With the cigarette lighter.

**Carrie:** That was a first... It becomes important, whether it's good or bad because you can write the shittiest songs in the world, but you still need to do it. And if you have the opportunity to enjoy the people you do it with, oh my god, that's a no-brainer.

**Brad:** I feel really lucky to have met people where that stuff clicks. That's a huge part of it. I'm always blown away when I meet bands where they clearly don't fucking get along, especially with small punk bands. If you guys aren't having fun or getting along at all, why do it? You're not making money. I've been fortunate with that kind of stuff.

**Todd:** The reason I'm interviewing you guys is that I like the Gateway District. It's kind of amazing to me seeing four people from four different bands that, over time, has become its own entity.

**Carrie:** It's really morphed quite a bit.

**Todd:** Between the first and second LPs it's morphed a lot.

**Carrie:** Very much.

**Todd:** The positive is I think it's getting stronger and stronger.

**Carrie:** If the shoe fits.

**Maren:** I think Carrie was buying her farm and getting to do that and knowing that you were really going to be in Wisconsin and quite a few hours away. At one point, you just said, "Can't we just do this forever? We can be like Pierced Arrows. 'Til we're sixty years old. We can just do this, right? Can't we just not put rules on it and just do it for as long as we want?" I think that's part of it. There wasn't a plan. There isn't a plan. It's fun.

**Carrie:** It's family.

**Maren:** We love to hang out with each other. Ten of us in one van right now and it's so fun. Maybe if it was a really long tour that would probably get old. It's nice to not have goals. [laughter]

**Brad:** Absolutely! We are goal-less.

**Carrie:** Which is ironic because we write songs like wildfire. Our third LP is written. People are just hearing the second.

**Brad:** Three people writing songs is definitely different. You write four songs each and you have a new record. Kind of.

**Carrie:** It's worked really good. Maybe we just write too many damn songs.

**Brad:** Way too many.

**Maren:** We throw some out. The second record also got recorded a good deal of time before it got released. So, to us, it feels old, but it is sorta new.

**Todd:** I have a question about your jobs and limitations. Personally, I don't have goal beyond doing something really well and, hopefully, that other people will like.

**Carrie:** I think that's wonderful.

**Maren:** That's all you need.

**Carrie:** That's fantastic. Do the best that you can.

**Maren:** You do what you love and you do the best you can.

**Todd:** Brad, you're a house painter. Carrie, you own a farm. Maren, you teach math. How do those things inform how you become a musician in any way, shape, or form?

**Brad:** I would say that what I do has been more informed by being a musician. I pretty much work for myself doing painting work and shit like that because I can just pick it up and find work. I can work within the space that I have between touring. In the winters, I drive a snow plow truck for this guy and plow snow. That's also similar. As long as I'm around for that amount of time in the winter, I can do it. So I've ended up doing that stuff because it works with being in a band. There's a lot of fucking house painters in bands. [laughter]

**Maren:** Teaching is similar. The original idea, back when I was twenty, wasn't that, "I'll tour in the summer." But it was, "Oh, I'll keep my summers open." Because teaching is somewhat seasonal and there's breaks. You can get a good two weeks or two months off and go do what you want to do. And, at the time, it wasn't necessarily touring with the band, but just traveling or whatever.

**Carrie:** I don't think that anything I've done for a living has much to do with

my musical aspirations. In fact, they're probably debilitating. Not any more, but I had a nine-to-five for years and years that wouldn't allow me to tour or anything. There was just no way I could take a month off. I've always been really serious about what I was doing for a living. I've always ended up picking things that required a lot of dedication and commitment.

**Todd:** Give one example.

**Carrie:** I was an auto mechanic for ten years. That's what I went to school for initially. I took it very seriously. Jobs like that, you punch a clock and you get two weeks off a year after you've worked there for two years. That always came first. That was important to me. It was a good way to make a living and I wanted to do it well.

**Maren:** You had a certain sense of pride about proving and being good. Doing the best that you could do.

**Carrie:** Exactly. Now, I own my own business. I shoe horses for a living.

**Todd:** Is there a name for that?

**Carrie:** I'm a farrier. I can kind of do whatever I want, so long as I can make my mortgage payment. So, if this band happened six years ago, I don't know if I would have been able to do what we've done. We went to Europe. Three or four tours here. Nothing major. We just took a couple of weeks off at a time. It wouldn't be something I'd be able to do until now. I don't really connect what I write and why I do what I do musically to what I do for a living. I just do what I do. I don't know. Maybe in some way you could connect them because it's your personality.

**Todd:** I contend that a nine-to-five job kills the other aspects.

**Carrie:** Oh my god. You know what? I can totally relate to that. When I was working that job, I had no creativity. You know what's really weird about this band? I'm writing songs like a crazy lady now, to where I can crank out five in a month. But I haven't written songs like this since I was twenty. I agree with you. I think it was the punching of the clock.

**Todd:** Because nine to five is this invisible straw that goes into your fucking cranium and, when you're done, you just want to go home, drink, watch TV, fall asleep. Not even fun drinking. "I want to erase today" drinking.

**Carrie:** I absolutely agree with you. I remember complaining to my girlfriends on the phone every once in awhile and being like, "I have no creative intuition. I have no





EL DIABLO

desire to do anything fabulous or do anything crazy." And now I do.

**Todd:** Having that time when you're not dedicating everything to somebody else or some abstract thing, you can start thinking about these things. I work a lot on Razorcake, but I really like it because I get to think about the things I want to think about. I have my obligations. I don't want to be a shitbag.

**Carrie:** No, no. Anti-shitbag.

**Todd:** Completely changing the subject, what is your fondest memory of your favorite grandparent?

**Brad:** I have a million from my grandfather. He's ninety-eight years old right now and he's a World War Two vet who was in Battle of the Bulge. All the rest of my grandparents died a long time ago, when I was super young. He's been this presence in my life for a really long time. Just because of what he's been through and the time he grew up in, that he's still around. And he was always a Minneapolis guy. He worked for the *Star Tribune* newspaper as a maintenance guy his whole life. Retired from that. He just has a million good stories.

**Carrie:** My grandpa was always about the stories, too. We'd beg him to tell us war stories. He was a captain on a battleship in

the Korean War. He had stories about bodies in half, bobbing on the sea surface and running over whales with the boat; they'd be cut in half with the prop. Holy crap. "Tell us another one."

**Maren:** I moved back from California to Minneapolis because my grandma was getting old and she died last fall. But one of the best memories I have was with the Sovietettes, one of our first tours. We went to Cleveland, which is where my family is sorta from. My Nanna and Poppa came to the show and they pulled up some folding chairs and they sat right in front of us. They cocked their heads and listened and they loved it. [laughter and clapping] It was awesome. We stayed at their house that night and we snuck in because we were all a little bit tipsy. I have a lot of good memories, but that's one of the best.

**Dave:** Both my grandfathers had passed before I was three. Every summer, my Mom and Dad both worked, so all summer was just me alternating between my two grandmothers. One lived on a farm and one lived right in the city. And this is a city of three thousand people. Not really big time. They kind of both half raised me. I'd go play baseball on the farm and then when I was in the city, I did other stuff, go downtown with

my other grandmother. They were generally a big part of my life because I spent a quarter of my year at their houses. It was generally awesome because grandmas really spoil the hell out of you. Summertime really ruled.

**Todd:** It was like kid rental.

**Dave:** It was all baseball and candy.

**Todd:** Since three of you write lyrics and you guys have been writing lyrics for a long time, what's one lyric that you wrote ten years ago that you wouldn't write today? What's something that's changed fundamentally?

**Carrie:** I feel like I'm more direct now. I used to try to be clever, where it just became abstract, and not even abstract in a clever way, ironically. It just became a little bit nonsensical.

**Todd:** Elliptical?

**Carrie:** You're looking to—you don't necessarily want to be complicated—but I just tried to be clever. It was the first time writing lyrics and so you want to be really good and you don't know what you're doing. Now, they come off the cuff a little more. You get more to the point now. Me, personally. I don't try to reinvent the wheel.

**Todd:** What's one lyric you wish could be stricken off the record?



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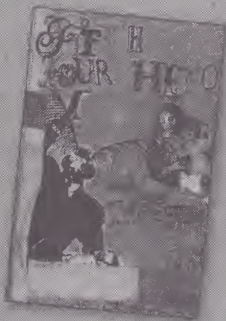
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# “THINK IF RYAN YOUNG, OFF WITH THEIR HEADS’ LEAD SINGER WAS A WOMAN.”

**Carrie:** Well why would I put it on the record? Christ almighty.

**Todd:** To embarrass yourself?

**Carrie:** I can do that fine by myself. You’re asking me?

**Todd:** Yeah.

**Carrie:** I labeled a song “My Libido.” That’s really dumb.

**Maren:** Even further after ten years is even more embarrassing. There’s a lot of embarrassing lyrics. For me, maybe it’s the opposite. Ten, fifteen years ago, it would all be so—I don’t want to use a word like “hidden.” It was not hidden. It was direct. It was so very direct and it was embarrassing. I think, for example, the “Fishman’s Story” song on the new record, it’s pretty direct. The words are not confusing. There’s a linear thing that happens. But I don’t know if you really know what the song is actually about. It’s not really about a fishman or pelicans or something. Maybe, in my own mind, I’m using more metaphors or something like that. Whereas ten years ago...

**Carrie:** “I like a boy! His name is Steve!”

**Maren:** Yeah, yeah.

**Brad:** All the stuff from Rivethead, I wouldn’t write now just because I was younger. I was in a different place in my life and time.

**Todd:** I’m not saying that people should be ashamed by that. It’s nice to have writing develop.

**Brad:** It’s not super embarrassing. I wouldn’t write that stuff now.

**Todd:** Did you blow up a bank? Did you off some pigs?

**Brad:** I didn’t write that song. Mike wrote that song.

**Maren:** I think, too, if you’re not a little embarrassed by stuff you did ten years ago...

**Todd:** You haven’t grown.

**Maren:** Exactly.

**Carrie:** But it’s cool because it’s a timepiece. You have to look at it that way or else you’d want to, you know, put yourself in the ground.

**Todd:** Or stop creating now. “Oh, I’m going to be embarrassed about this in ten years.”

**Carrie:** You can’t take it too seriously. My god.

**Maren:** Ten years. Even some of the stuff on our first record, I’m a little bit, “Oooh.” Good thing it’s on the second side.

**Carrie:** Who cares?

**Todd:** This is why I don’t like the internet. According to Amazon.com—you can agree or disagree about this description of The Gateway District.

**Maren:** Wow, Amazon listens to us.

**Brad:** [laughs] Amazon listens to us. The entity.

**Todd:** I just want your reflections on this.

**“Think if Ryan Young, Off With Their Heads’ lead singer was a woman.”**

[laughter]

**Brad:** You know, that’s weird because I think about that all the time.

[cackling]

**Brad:** He can wear a dress pretty nice.

**Maren:** [to Carrie] So is that you or is that me?

**Carrie:** You can have it. You can be Ryan Young as a woman. That is so bizarre.

**Brad:** The layers of what that means is so cool.

**Maren:** I think it must be you, because I already sound like Ryan Young as a man.

**Brad:** Could we just use that as our description as a band from now on? That’s so fucking cool.

**Carrie:** This is going to be a permanent part of every fest we play.

**Dave:** It’s funny because three song writers—that means that you, Brad, are writing songs as if Ryan Young was a woman.

**Brad:** That has always been kind of my muse. [laughter] “How would Ryan feel if he was a lady?” Let’s write a song.

**Carrie:** That is so crazy. That is awesome.

**Brad:** That’s the best question, Todd. Retodd, sorry.

**Todd:** Thank you, Half Pint... Maren, you’ve said this before that when you’re close to something, it’s hard to see it changing. How do you think the Gateway District has changed?

**Carrie:** Quite a bit.

**Maren:** Since the addition of Carrie.

**Carrie:** Two different phases.

**Maren:** I don’t even want to say “addition.” Since moving back to Minneapolis, I feel like it’s a different band.

**Brad:** It really wasn’t the same band until the lineup it is now, for sure. It was kind of a project thing that Maren and Nate did.

**Maren:** I feel like even from the first record to the second record, I know at least my songs on the second record—I wrote it with all of us in mind. Actually, not Brad because I don’t know anything about drums.

**Brad:** No one thinks about me.

**Todd:** Just think of Ryan in a dress. It’ll help her out.

**Maren:** Writing in Carrie’s parts—vocal parts—not as backups, but as a part. Together.

**Carrie:** I can’t be saying anything about what the band was like before I was in it, but the first record versus the second record is pretty easy. The first record, when we wrote it, they were all songs that were collected by all of us over the course of the last year or two when we didn’t really have anything to do with each other. We weren’t trying to write them for a band. We just had songs. Here’s three people who are sitting on a pile of songs. “Can we make a record?” Yes, because we had enough songs. It was more about having the songs. We hadn’t worked together at all. They didn’t meld together like a record should. It had the two goofy, weird country tracks of mine. And we hadn’t worked them as a band at all.

**Brad:** I think the idea of us playing together a lot in-between changed things, too.

**Carrie:** We formed a band.

**Brad:** After that record came out, most of those songs—it’s subtle, but there’s stuff we do differently in almost all of those songs after it was recorded. It seemed really rushed, really quick when we recorded the first record. In the meantime, we became a band. Played those songs a lot. Those songs changed. How we play together changed. We definitely had a different approach to the second record.

**Carrie:** I’m looking forward to the third.

**Maren:** The first record definitely had songs—like you said—written so far apart in time and space.

**Carrie:** They’re very disconnected. On their own you can like them or not like them. There were some good ones and there were some that weren’t as good as others. Just like any record.

**BRAD: THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN  
KIND OF MY MUSE. [laughter]  
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WAS A LADY?” LET’S WRITE A SONG.**



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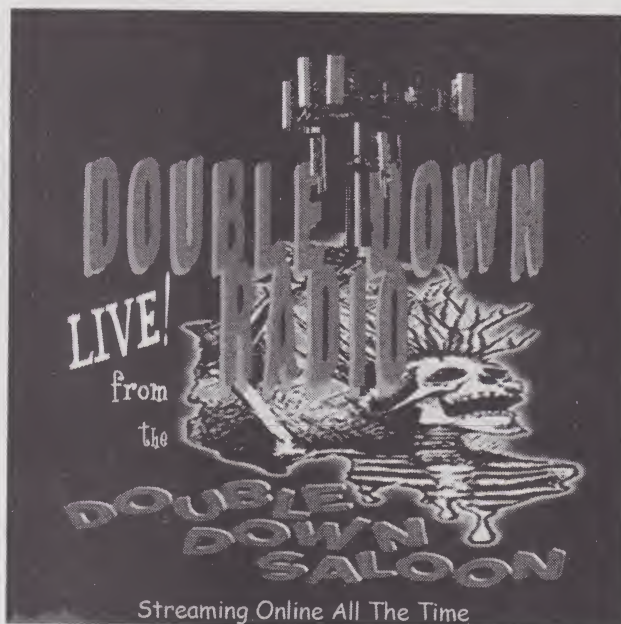
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**Brad:** I do kind of like that about the first record because, being a part of it, it's hard to tell what's going on. It was so weirdly put together. I like how unintentional it is. It documents this time when were a band that just got haphazardly together.

**Todd:** The thing that works for it, definitely, is that it doesn't seem calculated.

**Brad:** That's what I'm getting at.

**Todd:** It doesn't sound like it's grasping for anything.

**Carrie:** We're not trying for a sound.

**Brad:** It's the exact opposite.

**Maren:** Even in the artwork, I think you can see that. The first record, Adam, bless his heart, let us do a sixteen-page color book.

**Carrie:** Thank you!

**Maren:** We decided that each of us would make our own pages for our own songs. Even in the artwork, you can see that they are a little bit disconnected. They're somewhat connected through who wrote them, but it's, largely, a collage. Whereas the second record, the artwork is: "Here's a record."

**Dave:** As someone who's not in the band...

**Brad:** Dude, you're in the band.

**Dave:** Oh, man. Really? Fourth record, all Dave Strait songs.

**Brad:** You sound like Ryan Young as a lady.

**Dave:** The first record's cool because you said were writing songs coming from different places, but it's all you playing them. Even Carrie's country songs. It's not studio musicians coming in and, "Where the hell did that song come from?"

**Brad:** Oh, no. We hired people.

**Dave:** I'm way off.

**Maren:** We had a professional party box player he kicked the box of recycling for us to get that sound.

**Carrie:** Really, what happens with this band is we write so many songs per person, so it's still like a songwriting collective. That's what it is. We don't write them together. We write them on our own. Like Maren said, "I had this part in mine for Carrie to sing." We don't write together, but I think that's really cool because then you do get these different facets and they're really apparent. And you can like or not like one person's songs. You can tell. You don't really have to study the band to realize the difference and I think that's really cool.

**Maren:** Even the songs that are Brad's that I sing.

**Carrie:** Yeah, Maren sings all Brad's songs.

**Todd:** As Ryan from Off With Their Heads.

**Carrie:** As a woman, which is really more tricky than it sounds. You think he could pull it off, but no.

**Todd:** That's all I've got, besides going to the beginning of the interview. I think you've had a very wise band name because I'm thinking of the decimation of something, that a lot of people of lesser character would stop playing music. "My band's fucked. I'm done. I'm out of here."

**Carrie:** Oh, we don't do that.

**Todd:** But, the internal infrastructure—which is your personality—"I want to continue making music. I want to make something cool." You have an infrastructure now. You have the trolley lines.

**Carrie:** Out of the ruins sometimes comes the best thing. That's when some of the coolest shit happens. When things fall apart and when everything goes to hell in a hand basket, and that's another thing to write a damn song about.

**Maren:** That's when you really need to write a song.

**Carrie:** When I'm happy, nothing happens.

**Maren:** No good songs come from being happy.

**Carrie:** I really don't mean to make it like that. I'm a very happy lady.

**Maren:** But it's true. When shit goes to hell in a hand basket, that's when you really need to write some songs.



RACHEL MURRAY









# ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL SOCCER BOOK PUBLISHING AND CORPORATE IDEOLOGY

SEAN CARSWELL

Illustration by CRAIG HORKY  
layout by TODD TAYLOR

Comedian Chris Rock has a bit about forever listening to the music you listened to when you first had sex. He jokes that he'll be an eighty-year-old man, still rapping along with Wu-Tang. Though he's joking, he's picked up on a pattern. People hang on to the rebellious music long after the rebellion fades. But it's not that simple. Parts of the rebellion linger, only in different ways. Take, for example, punk rock. It's been around a long time. The New York Dolls were a band before I was a being. The Ramones formed almost forty years ago. This means that the teenagers who went to those early CBGBs shows can join the American Association for Retired Persons. More and more, I see tattooed, gray-haired punkers wearing threadbare band T-shirts while they buy multivitamins at the local hippie grocery store. It's strange. It also raises the question of what happens to the rebellion.

For me—a guy who has spent more than two decades listening to punk rock with his own gray hair and band T-shirts older than some readers of this magazine, yet whose musical tastes still haven't expanded beyond punk rock—it's not so much a question about the rebellion fading. It's true that I don't want to smash the state anymore. I work for the state. I rarely call police officers pigs anymore and cops never think to pull me over or harass me anymore. I haven't raised my middle finger in earnest even once this century. Even so, two decades of punk rock isn't about nostalgia. It's about theory. In my mind, I've created a punk rock theory. By theory, I mean a way of looking at the world, a punk rock lens, so to speak. Every thinking person develops a process for deeply questioning the ideas that culture assumes as a given and actions resulting from these ideas. Punk rockers tend to examine these cultural assumptions and practices through an essentially punk rock ideology. Now, part of my punk rock theory is that there is no one unifying or official theory. You'll notice that there has never been a single attempt to define punk rock in the sixty-five issues of *Razorcake*. That's part of the point behind this magazine: you get to come up with your own definition. I may question that definition. I may disagree, but I'll never act like I'm the bearer of the larger punk rock truth.

With that said, I do have my own punk rock theory. I think many punk rockers have developed similar theories. A big part of this theory is based upon a skepticism of not only large corporations, but the culture they create and the ideology they spread. This corporate ideology has come to saturate





**every aspect of contemporary culture. It has redefined freedom to mean the freedom of large corporations to exploit whoever they want in order to accumulate massive hordes of wealth. It has redefined democracy to mean a free market that is only free in the sense that the participants with the most wealth are free to do whatever they want, at whatever the cost. It has privileged the accumulation of wealth over any other human values. And it infiltrates everything we do. It becomes part of our unconscious thoughts. Yet, punk rock theory sometimes helps me to confront this corporate ideology and see how it operates in parts of our culture that have nothing to do with punk rock. That's what I'm going to do here. I'm going to look at two things that have little to do with punk rock—soccer and book publishing—through a punk rock lens. Hopefully, at the end we'll have a better sense of how our culture operates.**

## Soccer

I'll start with soccer. Whether you know it or not, there is a professional soccer league in the United States. It's called Major League Soccer (MLS). It started in 1996. I remember that day. My brother and I sat in a bar called the Cattle Baron in Flagstaff, Arizona and watched DC United play the San Jose Clash. I rooted for the Clash. I had to. I'd been rooting for the other Clash since I first heard "Janie Jones." The game was exciting in the sense that it was the beginning of professional soccer in the U.S. It was not exciting in the sense that the players weren't very good. Still, through the late '90s, I stuck with the MLS. I lived much of that time in Florida. Several times every season, I drove over to Tampa to watch the Tampa Bay Mutiny play. It was a mixed bag. On the one hand, the level of play had gotten much better since that first game. Tampa brought in one of the stars of the Colombian National Team, Carlos Valderrama. He made everyone around him better. The Muts also had a couple of younger players who showed a lot of promise: Frankie Hejduk and Steve Alston. Both guys ended up playing for the U.S. National Team and having great careers. Frankie Hejduk is still having a great career. On the other hand, the games were also dismal because they were held in the huge football stadium in Tampa. Twenty thousand people could show up, and the stands would look sparsely populated. When the Tampa Bay Buccaneers moved into their new football stadium in 1998, they worked out a deal that essentially bankrupted the Mutiny. I stopped going to games for a while.

Then a strange thing happened. After a few years of living in Los Angeles, I finally made it down to a Los Angeles Galaxy game. The Galaxy play in a stadium that's built for soccer. Unlike the narrow football field at the old Mutiny games, the

soccer field in Los Angeles is the right size. It's wide enough for the players to play the game the way it's meant to be played. All of the seats in the stadium are good seats. Nothing goes up high enough to give a nose bleed. The whole stadium celebrates soccer rather than celebrating the Bucs. The other thing that surprised me: the stadium was packed. My first Galaxy game came during the low point for the franchise. They'd made some bad decisions, had some bad luck, and were having one of those seasons when everyone playing knows they're going to be fired and replaced by players and coaches who have a chance of winning games. Still, the fans came out in big numbers. Three different sections of the stadium were reserved for supporter groups. The groups—the L.A. Riot Squad, the Angel City Brigade, and the Galaxians—sang songs, played drums, and waved flags throughout the game. I recognized some of the songs. In a couple of cases, they'd adapted lyrics from songs by The Business and Cocksparrer. Everyone partied as the Galaxy lost another one. It was everything I'd hoped for out of a professional soccer game. It would be too big of a stretch to call it a community of fans gathered around the game. Still, it was ninety minutes of a beautiful, shared moment between me and several thousand strangers.

I go to Galaxy games as much as I can now. Sure, I'm a Galaxy fan. It's more honest to say, though, that I'm a fan of the experience of Galaxy games. I love when they play the Briggs song right before kick off. I especially love it when they start the song too late and the visiting team has to stand in the middle of the field and wait for the song to end before they can kick off. I love when the Riot Squad changes the lyrics of The Business song "Guinness Boys" from "Guinness Boys, we are here" to "Riot Squad, we are here," yet they seem to keep the line "to fuck your women and drink your beer." I love when the Galaxy score and the crowd gets so loud my ears start to ring. I love to see soccer having caught on in America because it seems to be in opposition to much of what corporate America stands for. And here's where the punk rock theory comes in.

I've long heard people debate about when soccer will "catch on" in America. Conventional wisdom suggests that it will never catch on. But it already has. Take a look at a few statistics from the 2011 season. So far, several MLS teams have drawn a higher average attendance than Major League Baseball teams. This isn't a surprise in Seattle, where the soccer team the Seattle Sounders consistently outdraws the Seattle Mariners. The Mariners have never been a big franchise. The Sounders have sold out nearly every game since they started. Over 35,000 fans come to nearly every game. MLS teams outdrawing MLB teams is more of a surprise when it happens in Philadelphia, where the baseball team is the Phillies, who have won their division the last four years. Still, this season, the soccer team (the Philadelphia Union) draws more fans per game than the Phillies. Around the league, games typically draw an average



Soccer is clearly both profitable and extremely popular. The reason is because it is not profitable at a profit margin that satisfies major media networks, so it's essentially blacklisted.

of 20,000 fans. Some of the biggest soccer players in the world now play in the MLS. The newest MLS franchise, the Portland Timbers, sold out of every seat with an unobstructed view of the field within a few hours of tickets going on sale. And they didn't sell out for a game. They sold out for the season. Beyond the MLS, other big soccer games like World Cup finals and the European Champions League finals frequently draw huge television ratings. Nearly ten percent of American households watched the U.S. Women's National Team play Japan in the Women's World Cup final this summer. Think about that for a second. Nearly one out of every ten Americans watched women play soccer one Sunday afternoon. I'd say that's evidence of soccer having already caught on.

Still, the conversation about soccer not catching on continues. I wonder why and I have my own theory. Because punk rock has honed my skepticism toward corporate America, I have to look at how they react to soccer and why they react the way they do. In short, the problem with soccer from the perspective of corporate America isn't that soccer is not profitable. It is profitable. The problem isn't that it doesn't draw big TV ratings. It does. The problem is that it can never be as profitable as other sports, like baseball, where you have eighteen commercial breaks built into every game, or football, where an hour-long game is televised with two and a half hours of commercials in between. With soccer, the only advertising break is during halftime, when everyone walks away from their TV anyway. So, really, the only place soccer is not catching on is with advertisers. Sure, they can put their company's name on the team's jersey or they can put a banner up around the field. In the case of the MLS team the New York Red Bulls, a corporation can even buy a team and name it after itself. That can't compete with football, which wraps 150 minutes of commercials around every 60-minute game. So it creates incentive for the advertising-driven media to promote the hell out of football. That's where the money is. So they do. ESPN broadcasts a daily football show even through the off season. There are times when football games haven't been played for months and won't be played for months, yet you can sit there in the spring and watch a show about games that won't be played until the fall. Yet, you can't catch a single highlight of the nine MLS games that were played that day. And the reason is not because soccer is not profitable or is not popular. Soccer is clearly both profitable and extremely popular. The reason is because it is not profitable at a profit margin that satisfies major media networks, so it's essentially blacklisted.

## Books

This problem that soccer faces is very similar to one that is occurring in the contemporary publishing industry. Just as conventional wisdom suggests that soccer will never "catch on," it also suggests the book publishing industry faces two problems. The first problem is that fiction, and particularly literary fiction, doesn't sell. The second problem is that e-books are taking over the market. Nearly every week, the *New York Times*—which is one of the few major media outlets that even talks about

books—has an article about e-publishing. If you pick up any one of these articles at random and read it, you'll notice something about the statistics that they provide. All of the impressive statistics are speculative. They'll go on about a day when e-books will take over the market. That day could be any day now. Read between the lines of the article and make no mistake, though: that day is not today. The *New York Times* is not alone in this. Several publications have been parroting the same press releases. Sometimes, buried in the article, you'll find the far less impressive but far more significant statistic: at the end of 2010, e-book sales accounted for about 8% of overall book sales. Stated another way, 92% of books sold last year were made of paper. Now, I don't want to discount 8% of the market. That's a lot of e-books. They are catching on, but 8% of something is not a majority and it's not a trend that is taking over.

Surely, the book publishing industry will change. It will probably change much in the way that the record industry changed in the early '80s. E-books are similar to the first cassettes. They are convenient in certain ways, yet they're more temporary than the medium they seek to change. The e-books you buy today will be worthless in ten years. The delivery systems will have changed too much, the programming that drives the tablets will likely no longer read your old e-book files. Yet, like the records I bought in the early '80s, the books I buy today will last me for decades. So e-books will survive and they'll be an important part of the market, but paper books will be like records: the people who really value the art form will always buy them.

The other conventional wisdom—that fiction doesn't sell—is even more questionable. We live in a time when entire generations have bought and read the Harry Potter series. No nonfiction book has sold as well as Harry Potter. Even more recently, we've seen the runaway success of the *Twilight* series. And, say what you will about the series, it was fiction and it did sell. Even literary fiction sells at the same 3% to 5% profit margin it has always sold at. Of all the entertainment industries, the book publishing industry—and specifically, the industry for literary fiction—has taken the smallest hit in actual sales during this current recession.

So where does this contemporary wisdom come from? Well, it comes from the corporate takeover of book publishing. Prior to the 1980s, book companies sought to make that 3% to 5% profit. By and large, they made it. For close to a century, they existed comfortably with that profit margin and that business model. In the '80s, big corporations—Disney, NewsCorp, and Bertelsmann in particular—bought out many of the old book publishing companies. For the big corporations, the standard profit model wasn't enough. They sought to sell books at closer to a 15% to 20% profit margin. The publishing companies couldn't make that money by using their old business model, so they changed. The change, again, moved toward advertising. Now, you can't place advertisements in books the way you can in magazines or TV shows. However, like in movies, you can embed ads in books. I'll explain this using an example I noticed while on my last book tour in 2008.

Nearly every city I stopped in, nearly every bookstore I read in, promoted the same book. Unfortunately, it wasn't mine. It was a book



November 2011

# PIRATES PRESS RECORDS



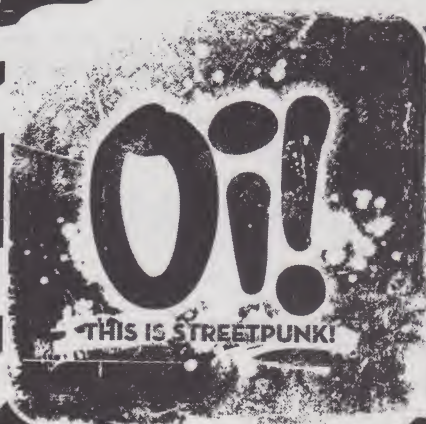
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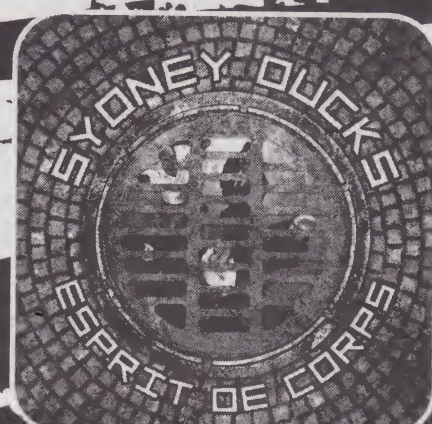
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# Focus on the local, help to build a community of like-minded individuals, *aim for sustainability rather than opulence*, and benefit from the global advantages that the internet provides.

by a former child actress who had lost a lot of weight by using a diet product. Now, to understand why that book was so heavily promoted, we have to understand the advertising aspect of it. The direct profit margin off this book is no greater than it would be if it were a book of literary fiction. However, the bookstores could use the visit from this (sort of) celebrity to bring people who don't typically read into their stores. Thus, the book serves as an advertisement for your local big-box bookstore. Since the bookstore makes a much higher profit margin off the knick-knacks they sell than they do off the books they sell, bringing this type of crowd into the store is more profitable than bringing readers into the store. The parent company of the publisher could use the book as advertising for a new TV show starring this actress. The show, not coincidentally, was on a network owned by the same parent company that owned the publishing company. The weeklies that promoted this book could use their article to sell advertisements to both the television network and the company that sells the diet product the book promotes. And, in general, the book matches a corporate media profit model because it is essentially both a commodity and an advertisement in commodity form.

This has nothing to do with what readers want. In fact, the types of books that took the biggest hit during the recession were these trinket books like the one I just mentioned. The bookstore conglomerate Borders is currently going out of business. A big reason behind its fall lies in the marketing of trinket books. Several of the independent booksellers are surviving for the opposite reason. They recognize that certain books—political nonfiction, literary fiction—always sell. And I understand why. I'm a voracious reader. No matter how broke I have been in my life, no matter how tight money has gotten, I've always bought books and records. People like me—the fanatics—keep bookstores and record stores alive during recessions. People like me don't go to Borders or buy the book promoted by the big corporate publishers.

## Mixing It Together

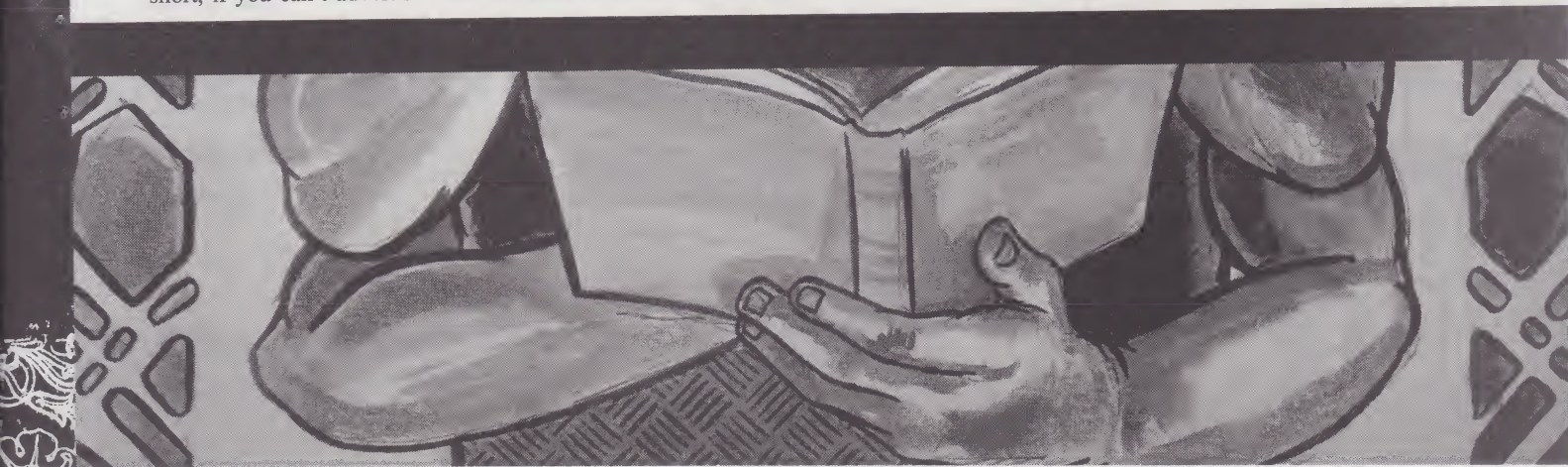
Now, if we combine all of these elements, we can reach some interesting conclusions. First, examining industries that are only marginally connected to punk rock somewhat validates punk rock theory and the punk skepticism of large corporations. We can see that the so-called free market is nowhere near democratic. We cannot vote with our spending habits. Soccer and books demonstrate this. Both professional soccer and literary fiction are hugely popular in the United States. As a culture, we've spoken with both our money and our actions. We've said, we want soccer and we want literary fiction. Despite how much people want these things and despite the fact that we're willing to pay the asking price for certain cultural industries, corporations will limit our exposure to these industries because the industries don't conform to a very specific profit model. Further, we can see how deeply the advertising industry saturates our culture. In short, if you can't advertise—and advertise to an excessive level—

in this cultural industry, then the industry is worthless to corporate America. So, as a culture, we lose out. Our voice is largely silenced and our opportunities to share these beautiful moments are crippled.

Still, there's hope. After all, literary fiction and Major League Soccer are surviving, just as punk rock is. All three demonstrate another model, one of resistance to consumer corporate culture. All three are built on a model of local and global communities. MLS was able to survive and thrive by building soccer-specific stadiums, like the one the Galaxy play in. These stadiums invite this community feel. They help to energize a local fan base. They encourage support groups. They break from the corporate model of always being bigger, of making everything conform to that which accumulates the most capital. Instead, they live with a modest profit, and they do it locally. They further utilize emerging technologies without being strangled by them. At this point, a soccer fan no longer needs ESPN or any station on cable TV. For a price, we can watch most of the games through the MLS website. We can watch daily and weekly shows about the MLS for free on the web. Most of these shows are mostly commercial free. I'm personally happier with this because I can follow the sport and support it in the one way that I'm cool with: by paying to go to games.

Likewise, the book industry is starting to see the rise of mid-list presses. These presses are somewhat reverting back to the old model of a 3% to 5% profit model, but they also embrace the emerging e-book technologies. The fall of Borders, the weakening of Barnes & Noble, the advent of e-books, and the prevalence of book blogs devoted to independent books all demonstrate hope that they can solve the problem of the big box monopoly that bullied the book industry for almost two decades. Any stats I give about this would be as speculative as the e-book stats I criticized earlier. Still, I have my prediction. I think books will become like records in a sense. Literary fiction will survive the same way punk rock (and hip-hop, for that matter) have: by selling the paper book and records to the types of people who have always bought them. And, while the corporate-controlled media will always be dependent on advertising dollars at the expense of our democracy and culture, it's nice to acknowledge that alternatives not only exist, they are thriving.

In a sense, everything I've seen lately in soccer and the book industry is a well-worn path in punk rock. Major League Soccer and literary fiction are simply following a model that punk rock labels like Dischord and No Idea (and, well, punk rock zines like *Razorcake*) have used for years: focus on the local, help to build a community of like-minded individuals, aim for sustainability rather than opulence, benefit from the global advantages that the internet provides, but figure out a way to survive without them. In the end, it's heartening. I may be too old and have seen too much to still believe that punk rock can save the world. Still, I can happily look at punk rock to show me alternatives to the destructive corporate ideology that makes living in contemporary America a bit of a bummer.





# TOP FIVES

## RAZORCAKE STAFF

### Adrian Salas

#### Top 5 Songs Based on Comics

5. Ramones "Spider-Man" (cover of Spider-Man theme)
4. Anthrax "I Am the Law" (Judge Dredd)
3. The Bomb "The Rescue" (Never specific, but definitely Superman)
2. Damned "Melody Lee" (A British kid's comic named *Bunty*)
1. Naked Raygun "Coldbringer" (*The Dark Knight Returns*)

### Andy Conway

1. ALL, Descendents, and Plow United at Riot Fest East, 09/25/11
2. Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness* LP
3. Vacation, *Vacation* LP
4. Frank Zappa, *200 Motels* LP
5. Hoax, *Hoax 7"*

### Art Ettinger

- A Radio With Guts, *Acoustic* (reissue with unreleased tracks) CD
- Various Artists, *Maximumrocknroll Presents: Noise Ordinance* LP
- The Spits, *V* LP
- Crusades, *The Sun Is Down and the Night Is Riding* In LP
- The Connection, *New England's Newest Hit Makers* LP

### Ben Snakepit

#### Top Five Burritos of Awesome Fest Weekend

1. California burrito from Benny's
2. Surf and Turf from the place up the street from Bear Paw's
3. Chile relleno from Rigoberto's
4. Carne asada from Los Panchos
5. Carnitas from Ray's.

### Candice Tobin

1. The Brokedowns, *Species Bender*
2. Fugazi, *The Argument*

3. Toys That Kill, *Shanked!*
4. Dillinger Four, *Situationist Comedy*
5. Mclusky, *Mclusky Do Dallas*

### Chris Mason

#### Top Five Sets I Caught at Awesome Fest

1. Iron Chic
2. Scared Of Chaka
3. Mean Jeans
4. Muhammad Ali
5. Steve Adamyk Band

### Chris Terry

1. The Energy, *The Energy's First Album* LP
2. You can still call me "C.T." if you want.
3. Danny Brown, *XXX* MP3s
4. Being all coffee'd up in Al Scorch's living room and hearing "Troubled Heart" by the Future Virgins for the first time.
5. My short story "The Language of Hairzilla" online in *SmokeLong Quarterly* 33.

### Christina Zamora

#### Top 5 Moments at Awesome Fest 5!

1. The Bananas and M.O.T.O. at Bar Eleven
2. Carrying a liter bottle of Jameson in my purse all day Saturday.
3. Giving Nato Coles a pint glass filled with Jameson and ten minutes later, seeing him on the ground outside of Soda Bar.
4. White Wires, Mean Jeans, Vacation Bible School, God Damn Doo Wop Band at Soda bar
5. Sitting at the pool at my hotel with Donna B. drinking The Crackin and talking about the Ramones and PJ Soles topless scenes in movies.

### Corinne Elmore

#### Top 5 Shows at Awesome Fest 5

1. Rumspringer
2. Muhammad Ali
3. David Dondero
4. The Bertos
5. Greenland Is Melting

### Craig Horky

1. ALL (with Chad Price) live at the Bottom Lounge in Chicago

2. Broadway Calls, *Toxic Kids* EP
3. The Bombpops
4. Gigposters, Vol. 2 (book)
5. *Color Ink Book Magazine*

### Craven Rock

1. Occupy Wall Street/Occupy Seattle and all sister protests
2. *Do the Work* by Steven Pressfield (book)
3. Tie: KRS-One & Marley Marl *Hip-Hop Lives* CD and KRS-One & Buckshot *Survival Skills* CD
4. *Sugar & Heartstrings* by Amina Foxdye (zine)
5. Capone-N-Noreaga, *The War Report* 2 CD

### Danny Spit

1. NoMeansNo, *Wrong*
2. Dead Fucking Last, *Proud to Be*
3. Das Racist, *Sit Down, Man*
4. Scaredycat, *Nine*
5. Too Many Daves, *Dawn of the Daves*

### Daryl Gussin

- Awesome Fest 5 tie with *Razorcake* 10 Year Anniversary Show
- Brain F~~z~~, *Sleep Rough*, tie with Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness*
- True Stereo 7"
- Crusades
- "Things Take a Turn" by Career Suicide. Punkest song of 2011.

### Designated Dale

1. Our two-year wedding anniversary this past October 10th. My lady sure is somethin' else. Love you, Yvonne!
2. D Generation at the Troubadour in Hollywood, CA on 9/24/11. NYC rock'n'roll is still alive and well.
3. The Riverboat Gamblers' *Smash/Grab* EP. Continuing to reiterate the RBG's sonic translation of "Don't Mess with Texas."
4. Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood, CA. For over fifty years, this L.A. institution of a drum shop continues to serve many a sticksman respectfully without the loads of happy horseshit that Guitard Center & Sam Ass like to shovel into your lap. Thanks, Jerry!

5. The newest addition to our feline familia, Sheena (aka, The Other White Meat). Do Sasha (R.I.P.) proud, Sheena; you failing, lovable punk-ass!

### Ever a.k.a. The Girl About Town

1. Rorschach at Aladdin Jr., Pomona, CA
2. *Razorcake* Anniversary Show!!! The Arrivals, Hex Dispensers, Young Offenders, and Toys That Kill at the American Legion in Highland Park
3. Azül and Narwhal Party at Aladdin Jr., Pomona, CA
4. Release of the new limited edition GURU sneaker!
5. The Zapp Bad at The Art Laboe Show

### Jennifer Federico

#### Top 5 Bands That Make You Feel like You're on Drugs Even When You're Not

1. Scratch Acid
2. Arab On Radar
3. James Arthur's Manhunt
4. Liars
5. Daughters

### Joe Dana

#### Top 5 Most Memorable Moments of Awesome Fest

1. My friend grabbing me during Lenguas Largas' set and scolding me for not turning him on to them sooner.
2. Leading six cars (including one with members of new favorite band, Iron Chic) on a wild goose chase to Pokez for breakfast only to find it closed for Labor Day. Sorry about that, chaps.
3. A cabbie becomes our all weekend chauffeur after getting us to the Vacation Bible School show in five minutes!
4. The stage is for *everyone* during Rumspringer.
5. Scared Of Chaka! Bananas! M.O.T.O.! Shang-A-Lang's last West Coast show! Don't make me choose! Why does it have to end?!

### Juan Espinosa

- Suburbanite 7"
- Total Control, *Henge Beat* LP
- Big Crux, *Nature Cruising* 12"
- Volahn and Arizmenda live at Vacation Records
- Moving to the Bay Area soon

### Kurt Morris

1. Radiohead, *The King of Limbs*
2. James Bond films

# YOU'RE NOT ALONE.



3. M83, *Hurry Up, We're Dreaming*
4. Black Flag, *Loose Nut*
5. Black Flag, *My War*

#### Lauren Measure

##### Top 5 Records I Finally Stopped Sleeping On

1. Archers Of Loaf, *Icky Mettle*
2. Sugar, *Copper Blue*
3. MEN, *Talk About Body*
4. Tenement, *Napalm Dream*
5. Future Virgins, *Western Problems*

#### Matt Average

- Big Crux, live at Kimo's
- No Babies, live at the Smell
- Rat Columns, Self-titled EP
- Rank/Xerox, Self-titled LP
- Negative Lifestyle, *Panic EP*

#### Mark Twistworthy

- Stymie
- Crusades, LP and live
- We Were Promised Jetpacks new CD
- The OBN IIIs, LP and 7"s
- VLHS! So fun!

#### Marty Ploy

1. 12th & G Benefit Compilation LP
2. Sloane Peterson, *Why Go Out*
3. Shovel & Gun, demo CD-R
4. The Manix, *Neighborhood Wildlife*
5. Big Eyes, *Hard Life LP*

#### Mike Faloan

1. Blue Plate Special, *On the Tracks CD*
2. Chad Harbach, *The Art of Fielding* (book)
3. The Jennifers, *Well-Intentioned World CD*
4. Matt Kindt, *Revolver* (comic)
5. Various Artists, *Stroke: Chris Knox Benefit 2 x CD*

#### Mike Frame

1. Michael Monroe, *Sensory Overdrive CD*
2. Jayhawks, *Mockingbird Time CD*
3. Joan Jett, live in Deadwood, SD
4. Wild Flag, Self-titled CD (punk)
5. Rocket From The Tombs, *Barfly LP*

#### Naked Rob

- The Thrash Attack/SFC
1. Low Places, *Spiritual Treatment LP* (pow vio)
  2. Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness CD* (punk)
  3. Glambilly, *White BBQ Sauce CD* (Texas rock)
  4. Landmine Marathon, *Gallows CD* (grind)

5. Delaney Davidson, *Bad Luck Man CD* (NZ blues rock)

#### Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Rock Stardom for Dumbshits* book (A genius reference for losers by The Phantom Surfers)
2. Nu Sensae, Iceage, White Lung live at the Waldorf Hotel in Vancouver
3. *Fresh at Twenty Book* (The Oral History of Mint Records)
4. Neptoon Records in Vancouver
5. Backspin Records in Austin, TX

#### Nighthawk

1. The Cardinals Winning the NL Wild Card!
2. The White Wires, *WWII CD*
3. Bad Sports, *Kings of the Weekend CD*
4. Awesome Fest 5 CD
5. Richard Pryor, *Black Ben the Black Smith LP*

#### Rev. Nørð

- Guida, *Racey Roller LP*
- Happy Thoughts, Self-titled LP
- Thee Spivs, *Taped Up LP*
- Dwarves, The, *The Dwarves Are Born Again*
- Holly And The Nice Lions, *Let's Get Wild! CD*

#### Paul J. Comeau

- Top 5 Things I Was Listening to in 2001*
1. Snapcase, *Progression through Unlearning LP*
  2. Kill Your Idols, *This Is Just the Beginning CD*
  3. Minor Threat, *Complete Discography CD*
  4. Various Artists, *Our Own Way: An International Hardcore Compilation CD*
  5. Various Artists, *West Coast Hardcore Vs. East Coast Hardcore CD*

#### Rene Navarro

1. Juana Janeth Galaviz Esparza
2. God Equals Genocide / Libyans, *Split 7"*
3. Lenguas Largas live at the Tower Bar in San Diego
4. The Who, *Who's Next LP*
5. The drumming in Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman"

#### Replay Dave

- Top 5 Records to Listen to While Occupying Gainesville*
- Senders, *Lucidity/Lividity LP*
  - Big Kitty, *Florence LP*
  - Jon Gaunt & Guerrilla Grass 7"
  - Good Luck, *Without Hesitation LP*
  - The Blind Shake, *Seriousness LP*

#### Rhythm Chicken

##### Top 5 Unpunk CDs I've Been Listening to at Work (aka Top 5 Guilty Pleasures)

- Perez Prado and His Orchestra, *Mondo Mambo!*
- Whistkeytown, *Strangers Almanac*
- Maritime, *We, the Vehicles*
- Cake, *Comfort Eagle*
- Martin Denny, *Exotica 1 & 2, The Exciting Sounds of Martin Denny*

#### Ronnie Sullivan

- My Top 5 Razorcake Podcasts*
1. # 17 with Sean Carswell
  2. (It's not really a podcast, but...) Chapter One of *Shirley Wins* with Todd Taylor
  3. # 117 with Ben Snakepit
  4. # 175 with The Young Offenders
  5. # 137 with Mitch Clem

#### Russell Van Cleave

- ADD/C, *Busy Days*
- Justin Hinds & The Dominoes, *Peace & Love*
- Pine Hill Haints, *To Win Or to Lose*
- King Friday, *Everything Is Not OK*
- Various Artists, *Decca Country Classics 1934-1973 Box Set*

#### Ryan Horky

1. House Boat, *The Thorns of Life LP*
2. Mountain Goats, *All Eternals Deck LP*
3. Worriers, *Past Lives 7"*
4. Caves, *Homeward Bound LP*
5. Wolves, *In The Throne Room, Celestial Lineage LP*

#### Ryan Leach

- Top 5 Things about the Wall Street Protests*
1. Class warfare against the poor is being addressed.
  2. Wars in the Middle East are being addressed as a drain on social services and the economy.
  3. Unions are waking up to the fact that the Democratic Party is not their ally.
  4. President Obama is not a friend of the working poor. He's not a "socialist"; far from it.
  5. The feeling that you're not alone, plus the realization that (by and large) police officers, politicians, mainstream media, and corporate CEOs are not on your side.

#### Sal Lucci

##### Top 5 Zines I Still Miss

1. *Hitlist*
2. *Flipside*
3. *Under The Volcano*
4. *Rock And Roll Outbreak*
5. *Carbon 14* (It's been like two years since the last issue... could it really be gone?)

#### Sean Koepenick

##### Bands I Have Seen Live Recently That Are Still Keeping It Real

1. The F.U.'s
2. The Jabbers
3. Street Dogs
4. The Dopamines
5. Stiff Little Fingers

#### Steve Hart

1. Amebix, *Sonic Mass*
2. Occupy Wall Street Protests
3. George Helm, *A True Hawaiian CD*
4. Zepthember Concert on Maui
5. *Bowie in Berlin* (book)

#### Steve Larder

1. Drainland/Cellgraft, *Split 7"*
2. Cloud Rat, Self-titled 12"
3. Corrupted, *Garten Der Unbewusstheit CD*
4. Diet Pills/Grinding Halt, *Split 7"*
5. The Body/Whitehorse, *Split 7"*

#### Todd Taylor

- Crusades, *The Sun Is Down and the Night Is Riding In LP*
- Bertos, The, *San Diego, CD-R demo*
- Cheeto Champ, *Gets the Giggles CD*
- Red Dons, "A Forced Turning Point" b/w "Se Foi" 7"
- Steve Adamyk, *Desecrate 7"*
- Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness LP*

#### Ty Stranglehold

##### Top 5 "W" Bands

1. Wire
2. Weirdos
3. Wizo
4. Wipers
5. Wednesday Night Heroes

#### Vincent Battilana

- Aye Nako tape
- Dirty Marquee tape
- Homeowners tape
- Happy Noose, Self-titled LP
- Ghostface Killah, *Ironman 2 x LP*





### ABSUM: Demo: CD

Picked this demo up out of the free box at my sweet Local Record Shop, a few months ago and just got around to checking it out recently. I wasn't sure what to expect, but was totally stoked to find out that it didn't suck, and, in fact, ruled quite hard. Absum are a four-piece thrash/punk band hailing from CT. The three songs on this demo, an early promo for their debut 7", call to mind thrash legends Suicidal Tendencies. The riffs are all blazing fast. There are some brief spots of guitar wankery and epic amounts of crew vocals sure to spawn massive sing-alongs live. I listened to this on repeat close to twenty times (not hard when the three songs on this clock in around five minutes) and didn't get tired of it. While some of the riffage starts to feel repetitive, the creative use of gang vocals and sing-along parts helps keep all three of these songs interesting. The song "To Whom It May Consume," is by far my favorite of the three, as it's got the highest quantity of guitar wankery. Overall, this brief demo is a solid intro to Absum, and I'm stoked to check out their record. —Paul J. Comeau (Absum, absumCT@yahoo.com)

### ADOLESCENTS: *The Fastest Kid Alive*: LP

This album has been a long time in the making. Me? I've been waiting with bated breath ever since the release of 2004's *OC Confidential* came out, proving that the Adolescents were back and as relevant as ever. Right off the bat, as was the case in 2004, you can tell that the Soto/Reflex songwriting team has come a long way since the early '80s. These songs smack you in the face and drag you around the room, not necessarily with breakneck speed, but with hooks and melodies that can't be resisted. It is very obvious in the lyrics that the Adolescents are very concerned with where the world is and the place where it is heading. From hating children to trying to save them, all in thirty years flat! It's a change that suits them. I can proudly place this record along with my other Adolescents records. —Ty Stranglehold (Concrete Jungle)

### AGAINST EMPIRE:

#### *Thieves and Leeches*: LP

To see a band in their early stages, go through line-up changes, and still continue to stay together after a good amount of time warms my heart. Not many bands make it past the one or two year point. Many others don't even make it out to play beyond their local scenes. This band has accomplished more and can add U.S. and European tours under their belt. I think the first time I saw the San Fernando Valley-based band was back in 2005 as a five piece. Currently,



"I listened to this like eight times while writing this review and now I don't trust anybody."

—Jan Wise

SUBURBANITE: Self-titled: 7"

they are a trimmed-down force as a three piece. Musically, they used to fall into a cross of crust and anarcho punk, but this time around their sound has strong leanings of '80s hardcore. It's a more direct approach in sound that takes the music into higher energy territory than in the past. The songs are precise, yet played with a bit more speed, which adds gusto to the music. The complexity is now in the chord progressions and work with more layers that gives the songs the epic feel. Production is on the clean and bright side of the spectrum, which better suits the new direction of the music. Clarity helps define each element. Lyrically, they continue on with their social political commentary of what disturbs them. They also add in a cover of Crucifix's *Another Mouth to Feed*. As much as I love this new record, I am even more proud of what the band has accomplished. —Donothedead (Profane Existence)

### ALPINIST / MASAKARI: Split: LP

Crusher of a split here! Alpinist and Masakari both crank out the dark and heavy stuff. Some would call it "epic crust." Either way, the correct way to listen to this record is fuggin' loud. Masakari are incredibly heavy. So much low end in their sound! I love how thick the bass is in the mix, and the seriously pummeling effect of the drums (check out the opening of "Progress"—rare

that drums are so effectively recorded in the punk world). The vocals are a dry growl, without being completely Cookie Monster style. The songs range in tempo, using time changes effectively to give everything more punch and keep you interested throughout. The transition between "Hexenhammer" to "Modulation" is great and a perfect way to end the record: fast, huge in sound, and a total stomper. Alpinist, from Germany, are little less heavy, though no less effective in pulling you into the darkness the music creates. If anything, their songs are actually catchier (in a good way). The songs blaze, yet the crunching rhythms and slight time changes give the songs depth. "Subjection" uses a tried and true headbanging break that works every time. A little abrasive noise is added for texture as well. Pretty damn good. Nice artwork from Alex CF graces this as well. —M.Avrq (Halo Of Flies, halooffliesrecords.com)

### AMEBIX: *Knights of the Black Sun*: 12"

I think my pal the Reverend Paul Putrid put it best: "Who knew the trajectories of the Amebix and Killing Joke would cross to the point where you can't tell one from the other?" While maybe a bit more "rock" than even Jaz and the boys might dare to venture, the tune hear nonetheless bears traces of the same Killing Joke stamp as much of their other

recent output. Not to say it's a bad thing, especially when one considers that stamp could be found to varying degrees from the beginning, but it is interesting to note that the more they've progressed, the more that influence has become prominent. Also interesting is that this twelve-inch slab of wax has, count 'em, one track on it, with an etching gracing the other side. Sure, it's a good song, and the etching's purty 'n' all, but a bit of a burn when one factors in the cost per song ratio, not to mention it's a bit of a waste of a petroleum-based product, no? —Jimmy Alvarado (Profane Existence)

### AMERICAN HEIST, THE: Self-titled: LP

The American Heist from Houston is my kind of band. They're definitely firmly planted in their punk-as-fuck roots, but they also aren't afraid to borrow from folk music traditions. They remind me a lot of Hudson Falcons, but with slightly harsher vocals. From the maroon vinyl and super cool bank robbery cover art on down, this LP is a labor of love. There's no heist going on here, as these guys are doing all of us a favor by putting out a record. You can line up seven of your average dwarf oi bands and six would be called "dopey." The last band standing is called The American Heist. —Art Ettinger (Cutthroat, myspace.com/cutthroatreecs)

### AMPERE: *Like Shadows*: CD

It's taking every ounce of nerve I have to not listen to the little David Spade inside my head going, "Yeah I like Ampere. But I liked them better when they were called Orchid." I do admit, however, that Ampere are a bit more structured and deliver more of the kind of hailstorm-of-bricks heaviness that is crucial when playing such emotive and chaotic hardcore. It's over before you know it and most songs don't last any longer than a minute. It's good, it really is. Maybe in time I'll come around and listen to more Ampere. —Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

### ARMED SUSPECTS / BROKEN HEROES: *For the Punks & Skins*: Split: LP

Two of the East Coast's longest-standing, most adored oi bands are celebrated here on a nifty, unexpected split 12". Broken Heroes arose from the wonderful Headache Records scene and are known for mixing comedy with boot beats, whereas Armed Suspects play it straighter. Both bands prove here that they haven't aged at all, and that's a good thing. Some of the songs are new altogether, whereas others are re-recordings of classics those in the know already love. Oi! The Boat is a label that's keeping the fire alive, and at domestic prices, too. For an added good time, check out the Armed Suspects music video that's surfacing online. Maybe some of Broken Heroes' sense

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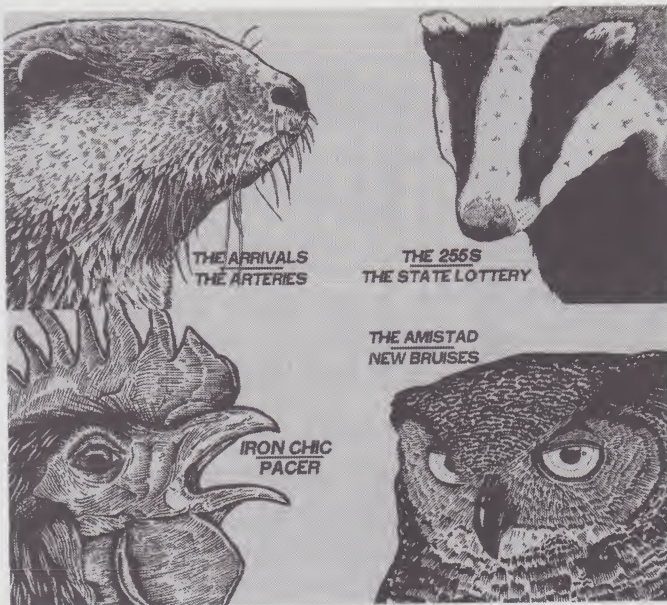
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of humor is wearing off on them. —Art Ettinger (Oi! The Boat)

#### ART YARD: *The Law: 7"*

A very little bit of history about this Boston band, based on the info contained on the insert: The two tracks here date back to a cassette compilation released in 1981, which looks to be the only release they were involved with back when they were active (the two songs here and two more also appeared on 2007's *Boston Underground 1979-82* compilation, according to the *Kill from the Heart* website) and this release is dedicated to one of the members, who died in 2010. "The Law" is a whip-smart slice of sophisticated pop brilliance that recalls a less abrasive Mission Of Burma. "Something in Your Eyes" is a bit slower, more experimental and akin to 100 Flowers, maybe. Both, however, retain a sense of freshness and vitality that often eludes the lion's share of their peers, which I guess translates to the fact that this has that much-ballyhooed "timeless" factor to it and I'd bet dollars to donuts that folks would shit their pants if this were a contemporary band. Looks like this is limited to three hundred copies, but it's definitely worth the mad dash. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ride The Snake)

#### AYE NAKO: *Demo: Tape*

Shortly after I moved back to Northern California in 2009, I went to a house show in San Francisco in order to see the brilliant Onion Flavored Rings. I didn't have any knowledge whatsoever about the other bands who were to play

that night. One of the bands who played was Fleabag, a three-piece. The guitarist/vocalist was taking the front of the room for the second time that evening, as she had played bass in the first band that night. I thought the first band was pretty good, so I was thinking that this band with two other guys should be at least decent. They were much more than decent. Their songs were at the right part of the tricky intersection of punk and indie. I was blown away by their coupling of melody and intensity. Marilyn, the vocalist/guitarist, is not a physically large person by any measure, but her voice is immense and her guitar playing is sublime. I ended up getting a copy of the Fleabag tape from her in the mail not too long after the show. I listened to that thing like Muslims pray towards mecca. Those five sweet and poppy tracks with their lyrics telling of inner malaise are imprinted on my mind. What does Fleabag have to do with anything, you may be asking. Aye Nako used to be Fleabag, who was once Aye Nako before that. The first iteration of Aye Nako was initiated in the Midwest. Then Fleabag did time in Oakland, CA. Now the second coming of Aye Nako is Brooklyn-based. All that said, I was stoked to see this cassette come my way. Marilyn and Joe, the bassist, have been the constant two-thirds of all three units. The output on all three tapes has sounded like a raw, DIY take on some amalgamation of Superchunk and Tiger Trap. They have honed in on their craft over the course of their years, which has resulted in a more finely tuned (and dare I say polished) sound. While the Fleabag

recordings will hold a special place with me, I must say that this cassette is a definite positive growth in song writing and recording (with a hardcore song thrown in the mix, which is okay for what it is, but totally caught me off guard. I just didn't think that the emotional turmoil of the band would manifest itself in such a fashion). If the world worked the way it should, you'd already be listening to this. Wholeheartedly recommended. —Vincent (Self-released)

#### BABY J, (THEE ULTIMATE): *Looking for a Sign: 7"*

I'd love to review this record without bringing Todd C into it, but he did record it, mix it, and play instruments on it, so I won't. Hope she won't mind the comparison, but I've always felt Baby J could be Todd's opposite sexed alter ego. In fact, the first time I put on a Stoned At Heart (the band Baby J and Todd are in together) record, my wife asked me if this was the new Underground Railroad To Candyland record. That made sense to me. Okay, enough already! This record is fucking fantastic. The first few songs sound like really great, stripped-down Stoned At Heart songs, while the rest are a bit softer and laid back. If you're a fan of any of the recent Recess Records output (how could you not be!?) as well as the likes of Kimya Dawson, then this is your new favorite record. Get it! —Chris Mason (Water Under The Bridge)

#### BIG KITTY: *Florence: LP*

Pretty strong alt-country sounds from this band, coming on a lot like

Lambchop or Vic Chesnutt. Members of ADD/C, Future Virgins, and Sexy are on here and this is quite a sophisticated effort. Excellent job and a real surprise from Recess Records. Looking forward to hearing more from this band. —Mike Frame (Recess, recessrecords.com)

#### BIRTHDAY PARTY BAND, A: *Lead Sky: CD*

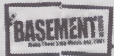
A slice of solid post punk-informed punk from Poland. This immediately brings to mind middle period The Ex, but with a bit more garagey succinctness. ABPB favors clean guitar and vocals over noise most of the time, but with the driving rhythms and personal-as-political lyrics (or in the case of "Police Song" political-as-political) the music carries a sense of urgency. *Lead Sky* is a spot-on title, as many of the songs reflect a practiced critical—verging on cynical—viewpoint. There is, after all, a song on here called "Something's Wrong with Everything." Basically, you should get this if you miss the indie-tinged foreign punk that Touch And Go would occasionally traffic before their demise. —Adrian (Nikt Nic Nie Wie, info@nnnw.pl)

#### BLACK BUG: *Self-titled: 7"*

When I was in high school, there was a noticeable lack of punks around, so I usually ended up spending my Friday and Saturday nights at goth clubs, where the music pumping through the speakers was good enough, but not necessarily something I was in a rush to find out more about. The A side of this 7" sounds exactly like something I would

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have heard at one of those clubs: synth and drum machine-heavy, dark, almost psychedelic post rock with female vocals straight out of the *Experimental Jetset*-era Sonic Youth playbook. Just like those songs I heard back in high school, this is good, just not something I'd seek out on my own. The Side B is a thirty second instrumental that just as easily could have been left off. —Chris Mason (Hozac)

**BLACK CLOUDS, THE: Self-titled: 7" EP**

From the sounds of this, these guys are aiming to strip things down to their primal core, with thumpa-thump drums, two guitars (could be my shitty stereo, but I ain't hearing much bass here) and screamy vocals. They do have the sense to slather on a bit of bluesy rock sheen to keep it from becoming a total skronk-fest, though. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ride The Snake)

**BLACK GOD: Self-titled: 7" EP**

One o' them bands that loves to find a groove and just grind it into your noggin, which is decidedly a good thing. Six tunes, none of which seem to go past the two-minute mark; rock-solid, mid-tempo and heavy without trying to sound heavy, if you know what I mean. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Idea)

**BLACK KITES: Songs Written while Things Were Changing: LP**

Three-piece playing Saetia/Reversal Of Man-type chaotic hardcore with the requisite howling wind screams for vocals. Instead of tempering the fast parts with clean guitars, they go

into sludgy grooves in weird time signatures. Considering that this is '90s screamo mixed with tech metal, it's remarkable how listenable and downright catchy it can be. Good shit, fellas. —Chris Terry (Protagonist)

**BRAIN F=: Sleep Rough: LP**

You can say that I'm totally high and I'm listening to a completely different band than what's actually playing on this record. I'm fine with that. Brain F= (pronounced "Brain Flannel" (no idea how the "not equal to" sign becomes "lannel")) come across as a bunch of hardcore folks who channel the following: Sweet JAP, The Saints, The Detroit Cobras, and Taschen. They embrace the stomp and go, barking and wailing, "If you fall off the back, it's your own damn problem" pacing of Sweet JAP. They bury the sweet and mysterious hookiness of the Saints (albeit completely aggravated and breathless, like the most frenetic tinfoil-in-caves-vertigo moments of *I'm Stranded*). The lady from the Detroit Cobras has a fuckin' awesome voice, but she's adamant that the Detroit Cobras are definitely *not* a punk band. Elise Anderson has an awesome voice and this is unabashedly a punk band. To tie it all up, there's art at work here that I don't fully understand, but I don't think they're mocking their audience and the graphics look nice, so that's cool. I rarely make comments about mastering and levels and whatnot because I don't know dick about that stuff—but this record's amazing in the fact that the two vocalists are nice and clear in the mix

among the buzzing ricochets of blasting instruments. I'm sure they're murder on live PAs. Exciting. —Todd (Grave Mistake, gravemistakerecords.com / Sorry State, brainflannel@gmail.com)

**BROWN SUGAR / MAYDAY!: Split: 7"**

Brown Sugar a play sneering, selfish, masturbatory, ennui-driven hardcore. It makes me think of what might have happened if Die Kreuzen or Void went down in the basement and jammed after a three day bender. It's good in an anti-hero kind of way. In the same way, Mayday! play ugly, anti-melodic punk with snippy female vocals. I can almost hear The B-52's "Rock Lobster" buried in the mix of the second song "In It to Win It," but without the slightest of pop sensibilities and some weird, dare I say, Fugaziesque guitar noodlings. —Craven Rock (Feral Kid)

**BUBBLEGUM SCREW: Screwphoria!: CD**


Well, first off, it's not bubblegum, which, all things considered, might be for the best anyway. Things start off promisingly enough with "Because He Loves You," a catchy enough punk-pop-glam-roll quasi anthem with a "Who! Everybody get rockin'!" kinda intro and female backing vocals with which my only major beef is that the singer's delivery is usually behind the beat ((and not in a cool way like Bing Crosby, either)) and the production is such that the singer's off-timey-ness is front and center in the mix. They hold serve for a while, acting as a green but drinkable fruit cocktail of pre-hair-metal CH3, post-hair-metal

CH3, the Heartbreakers, "Not Anymore" era Dead Boys, the Waldos, Radio Birdman, and hair metal itself, but, as the disc wears on, the hair metal and the "Not Anymore" aspects of things start to predominate and my interest wanes accordingly. In "Power"—about, you know, the POWER of their ROCK—they state "we're trying to make a sound like nobody else!" I dunno about you, but I would tend to put more credence into this assertion if it were not made by some guys who are depicted on their record cover lying underneath a bunch of Heartbreakers, New York Dolls, Runaways, Joan Jett, Damned and Iggy records, with a guy on the back cover sitting in a bathtub in a Johnny Thunders t-shirt. Just sayin' is all. BEST SONG: "Because He Loves You." BEST SONG TITLE: Well, "Operation" worked pretty well for the Circle Jerks. And "Teenage Fuck Up" worked pretty well for Really Red. "Rich Bitch" didn't do too poorly for DOA. Then again, "Kerosene" did wonders for Big Black. Maybe they're lying underneath the wrong records? FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Inner booklet art includes the image of a Zodiac Mindwarp ticket stub from 2011. I probably should have sent them my ZM ticket stub from 1988 for additional hair-metal cred. —Rev. Nørb (Blood Sucker)

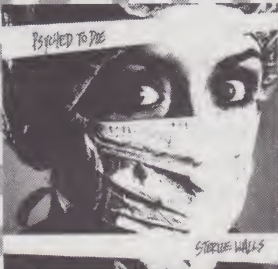
**CANNOMEN: Sex on the Bleach: 7" EP**

"Tidal Waves" starts things off with a catchy bit of surfy punk along the lines of Dead Kennedy's "Police Truck" or Channel 3's "Manzanar" and some

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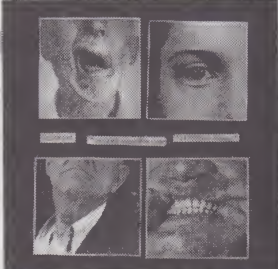
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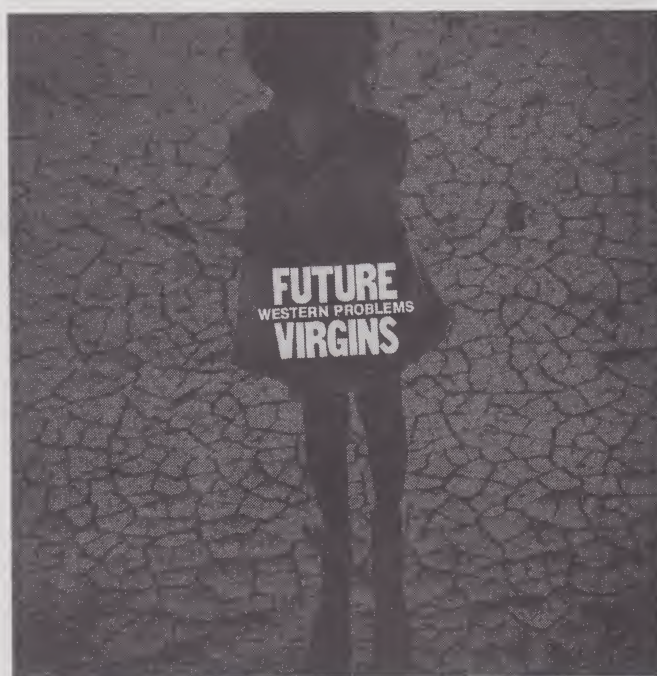


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"whoa-oh" choruses. The opener on the flip, "No Sex," is a straight off the Southern California circa 1981 template grade-A hardcore, and the closer, "I Drank the Bleach" sends you off with a hardcore ditty that would make the Zero Boys proud. Given the title and the nekkid goil cover, I was totally expecting some lame ass pop punk, and I'm glad I was wrong. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat Sandwich)

#### CHEETO CHAMP:

##### ***Gets the Giggles: 7-song CD***

One of my hot buttons in music is preciousness. I have no patience for "watching people make a sweater made out of musical notes instead of yarn" music. And although Cheeto Champ play their music with an undeniable sweetness and vulnerability, they more than balance it out by some furious pedaling, plenty of crunch, and well-placed "ilili!"s. Sweet is balanced with the sour. The sour balanced with salty and spicy. Cheeto Champ is the Takis Fuego of punk. Or cactus punk: able to thrive in harsh and barren environments, outward spines against intruders, solemn beauty. Adrian is one of the singers of God Equals Genocide. In Cheeto Champ, she pulls a vast majority of the lead vocal duties, and with that longer exposure, she really sounds like Iceland's Björk Guðmundsdóttir of the Sugarcubes, circa *Life's too Good*. Only took me five or six years to realize that. Comes inside

an impressive letter press cover and stamped CD artwork. I like this a lot. —Todd (Lauren, Lauren-records.com / Bite The Cactus, bitethecactus@gmail.com)

#### CHOSEN FEW, THE:

##### ***The Joke's On Us: 12"***

I was gonna go on some blathery spiel about how these Australians—best known for "Adolph, You Beauty!" i'd imagine—were the quintessential KBD band, when i realized that i hadn't listened to the original first few "Killed By Death" albums since i had 'em taped for purposes of listening to in my car whilst delivering pizzas twenty years ago, thus I should probably research this claim a bit, thus i looked up the contents of the first KBD comps, and, slap me silly and shoot the horse, these guys ain't on 'em, so what the fuck do i know anyway, and, without using examples, could i even define what it meant to be "KBD punk?" Sure, i'll 'ave a bash: "KBD punk" = the prevailing flavor of late 70's/very early 80's low-budget DIY punk, from the US and/or Canada but not England and/or the UK but possibly from Australia and/or New Zealand, that followed in the wake of the popular, major label stuff, but preceded the advent of hardcore as the dominant punky paradigm. I'm not exactly sure why the sounds of the KBD era can't be replicated, faked, or successfully imitated—given that the recordings of the era require no particularly special gear or period-specific talents—but, oddly, they can't. Only the gen-u-wine

article sounds like the gen-u-wine article, and i'll submit to you that no article sounds gen-u-winer than the Chosen Few. These half a dozen songs, originally released in 1978, have stood the test of time, have seeped into our punky collective consciousness, and will cling there, permanently, like a bacterial booger-mass, adhered forever to our cranial forecavity. I claim this because, if the Chosen Few weren't on the original KBD albums, then i'm not really sure whence i know songs like "Adolph, You Beauty!" and "T.A.L.O.I.G.A."—only that i do, indeed, know them quite well. A prudent observer might note that the presence of significant guitar leadage in this artifact indicates that the subjects were still running early influences like Blue Oyster Cult ((and whatever Michigan stuff Deniz Tek brought to the barbie)) thru the sonic reducer that was the first Ramones album, as opposed to the punky situation of a few years later, where bands were running early influences like the Ramones thru the sonic reducers that were the first Circle Jerks or S.O.A. Records. There might be a lot of it going around, but a wise man gets whilst the gettin's good. BEST SONG: "T.A.L.O.I.G.A." BEST SONG TITLE: "(Do The Manic) To Kill Or Maim, Honey!" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The actual label of the record makes use of both a zig-zag, AND the Lower West Side "shatter" font, the means by which we eventually DESTROYED THE SEVENTIES UTTERLY!!! —Rev. Nørð (Going Underground)

#### CLOROX GIRLS:

##### ***"Genocide" b/w "Bad Girls": 7"***

A double dose of powerpop-infused punk rock from Justin, Richie, and friends is what you get on the new Clorox Girls 7". The formerly Portland (and formerly Bay Area)-based Clorox Girls have settled in to Los Angeles quite nicely, recording these tunes at San Pedro's Cali Mucho studio with (now bassist for the band) Kid Kevin and co-released by the Pedro studio's label, 45 RPM. Poppy, bouncy, singalongs with the best harmonies in punk continue to make their mark with tunes steeped in the tradition of the Dickies' and Buzzcocks' catchiest. Nice to hear new tunes from band following a two-year hiatus. These fit in nicely with the rest of the band's work and hopefully serve as a teaser for a future full length. —Jeff Proctor (Hovercraft/45 RPM)

#### COBRA SKULLS: *Agitations: CD*

The Cobra Skulls have become one of the dependable go-tos for catchy political pop punk. Much like Bad Religion, there's a certain musical consistency they possess while still having a sound that is uniquely them, thanks largely to singer Devin Peralta's distinct voice (and if you've seen them live, his hair). Maybe it's because this is the band's first full length on Fat Wreck, but it seems like they turned down the Against Me! and turned up the NOFX/ '90s Fat sound. The song "All Drive," for instance, has a bass intro and main riff that easily could of come from *Punk in Drublic*. Also, the song "On & On" has backing vocals that brings to mind Lagwagon. While



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this band has always been defiantly left wing, the lyrics this time around may be their most plain spoken and strident yet. And good for them. "The Mockery" is a favorite, but the band pretty much cannibalized the main riff from their own earlier song, "Rebel Fate." This band really shines when they stray from their standard sound (like the couple of songs they do in Spanish on their earlier releases) and in this case, the pseudo-acoustic "Believe" that ends the album is the high point. Cobra Skulls are a strong band and this is a good release over all, but songs like "Believe" really showcase the potential this band has at putting out something really next-level-amazing someday. —Adrian (Fat)

#### COLA FREAKS: *Farvel*: 7" single

So, these guys came over sometime in the past year or so, and played Beerland in Austin. No where else. Just Beerland. I thought that was pretty strange. Why come over the USA, and only play one show? Well, turns out they were playing a show sponsored by *that* car company, the one that makes shitty plastic box shaped cars, akin to a glorified Matchbox car. That car company that somehow gets all these bands, metal and punk, to play "free" shows. Corporate sponsorship is corporate sponsorship. No matter if it's beer, shoes, or cars. It tarnishes a band, especially in a scene like punk. It's like if your lover fucked around, and you found out. Would you be cool with it? Say you were—you know there's going to be that nagging doubt forever in the back of your mind. Well... Before this

turns into a column, I'll stop with the editorializing, and talk about this single. Like everything they've done before, it's pretty damn good. I was skeptical of the Avengers' cover ("Car Crash"), but they pull it off and give it little more of a boost; just check out the bass and how it has a strong driving presence in the mix. "Farvel" is an original, and more along the lines to the direction they headed on their album. The keyboard figures in, giving this an early L.A. feel. It's bouncy, it's quick, it's catchy, and pretty damn good. Yes, pick this up. I still like these guys. But, things are a little different now. Something has come between us. —M.Avr (Local Cross, localcross.com)

#### CONSPIRACY OF OWLS: *Self-titled*: LP

From members of Detroit rock and roll band The Go comes Conspiracy Of Owls (whose name comes from a Bob Pollard tune. And Bob Pollard even contributes the artwork on the insert!). Conspiracy Of Owls is an odd bird to describe. Along with Still Flyin', these guys put together some of the slickest and smoothest, the most incredibly brilliant and expertly played music and, flawless, crisp, clear production that will largely fall on deaf punk and indie ears trained to eschew the kind of music that your square parents listen to. In short, this is yacht rock as shit. And, even better, this appears to be completely genuine, as opposed to another bit of pop culture scorched earth that is ironic hipsterdom. Listening to the record is like taking a trip on a time warp with a treasure map of '60s and '70s

sounds as your navigational device. The songs on the record are quite varied with sprinklings of glam, psychedelia, sunshine pop, and the smooth sounds of '70s California: the kind that your white wine drinking, Op corduroy short shorts and mustache-wearing dads listened to so they could score with your moms. Give it a listen and you'll hear T. Rex, David Bowie, maybe some early Alice Cooper. But what will be troublesome to many is that in addition to trips to the usual, universally cool stops, you'll find yourself having to face the kind of music that for decades has polluted the airwaves and become an omnipresent part of the backgrounds of our lives: Steely Dan while you're on hold on the phone; Seals and Crofts when you're grocery shopping; Boz Scaggs while riding an elevator. Those folks symbolized, to many, the death of the idealistic '60s and the adventuresome music that came along with it, and replaced it with musical crass commercialism: studio pros trained to make pop hits. But, as Warhol took the innocuous soup can, took it off a shelf and put it on to canvas to show the art of commerce and the uniqueness of the ubiquitous, Conspiracy Of Owls strips those sounds to its essence in this reclamation project: harmonized vocals, intricate layers of guitars and synths, accessory percussion and horns. All those things together create what is a masterful record of balance: both rock and roll weirdness and smooth jams, both instantly accessible to some listeners and incredibly challenging

to others. And it is, lastly, fantastically rewarding to all willing to give it a chance. —Jeff Proctor (Burger)

#### COPYRIGHTS, THE:

##### *North Sentinel Island*: CD

I finally figured out my stance on the Copyrights. They are an ideal EP band. I want to like them, but when I put on one of their full lengths, I zone everything out to background music after four or five songs. Yet, the times I hear a track or two from them on Joe Sibb's radio show, I start reevaluating them and thinking of them as more awesome. They have a very workmanlike way of crafting catchy Chicago-style pop punk, but it is almost too consistent over the long haul. So if one thinks of *North Sentinel Island*'s fourteen tracks as three EPs, it's a quite exceptional pop punk release. Go track one to five as EP one. Start again at track six "Bow Down," which really feels like an opening track due to the sampling. End this EP at eleven, "The New Ground Floor," which has a very epic ending. Finally, start again at twelve and you have yourself a nice three-track EP. So there we go, program this into the MP3 player as three EPs, and you have yourself a rad compilation album. As a bonus, this got me to look up what North Sentinel Island is. What would I do without an inspirational teacher like pop punk? —Adrian (Red Scare)

#### COPYRIGHTS: *Crutches*: 7"

As the years pass and the things that used to be new to me don't catch me by surprise so easily, I find myself asking for more.

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I'm not so jaded that I need a band to have everything, and I don't have a checklist or anything, but it takes a lot more for a band to get me psyched up than it did when I was fifteen. This record has me really psyched up. It's pop punk. It does everything that pop punk is supposed to do. But this record also does more than that. It tells stories. The lyrics aren't just throwaways. "Crutches," the title track, addresses that moment when a person realizes that old behaviors may not be the best behaviors, particularly when they're damaging. It's not about moving past them. It's not about succumbing to them. It's just about that moment of realization. To lyrically catch and explore a moment like that... and to have the music match? That's more than what I ask for from my punk rock. Maybe it's what I should ask for from now on? How many bands can deliver that, though? —MP Johnson (Red Scare/It's Alive)

#### **CORMANS, THEE: Halloween Record w/ Sound Effects: LP**

The package was so remarkable that I was hoping for something that was not to be. Wacky throwback '60s cover art? Realistic magazine-styled advertisements for the insert? In the Red Recordings? Is this one of the newest of the current crop of rock'n'roll purists like Hunx And His Punx and Shannon And The Clams to explore the territory of musical ages long since passed? Well, yes and no. It's a throwback record all right, but it's more interested in Dick Dale than the Kinks. I'll be the first to admit that an instrumental album doesn't sound appealing most

of the time. (Or ever, really. I don't like them at all.) And I'll also be the first to admit that I think anything can be done well. As an album of atmosphere, this is really good. I can't help but be amazed at the album as a whole. There's a part of me deep down that really loves concept albums and this one works so fluidly between sound effects and songs that I was surprised to find myself feeling uncomfortable during a few points in the record. All signs point to this album being high art. A concept followed to the final step made with love and passion for an unsung hero of media. —Bryan Static (In The Red, intheredrecords.com)

#### **CREDENTIALS, THE / DEAD UNCLES: Split: 7"**

Credentials: Todd said, "They're pretty poppy" when I picked this out of the pile and now that I'm listening to it, I can see why he issued that caveat. See, much as I like pop, and I like punk, and I love the earliest strains of pop punk's antecedents (think Undertones, Buzzcocks, and Descendents), most pop punk has given me a bad rash from the moment every suburban shit band on the planet decided that aping NOFX and the Queers was a rock-solid retirement plan. That said, yeah, these guys definitely fall under the pop punk banner, but the blessing here is they apparently could give a fuck about being on Ben Weasel's turntable darlings and opt for a more "indie" route, if you will. Yeah, I ain't all that jazzed about the tune, but I respect 'em, which'll likely mean fuck all to them, but is meant as a compliment

nonetheless. Dead Uncles: Can totally see 'em in a New Red Archives catalog circa 1989, right between Samiam and Jawbreaker. —Jimmy Alvarado (86'd)

#### **CROWBAIT: Three Tickle Guys: Cassette**

Five songs of Hot Water Music punk with a guitarist who knows when to go into a catchy lead. Nothing new here, but the tape insert holds enough inside jokes that I'd go to their show just to hear the funny shit they say while tuning. —Chris Terry (Dead Broke, deadbrokerecords.com)

#### **DAMNABLE EXCITE ZOMBIES:**

##### **Discography 1990-1996: CD**

The title says it all: a discography. A collection from various splits, a 7", comps, and live set from their reunion in 2010. The name of the band should give a clue that the band was from Japan. What it doesn't give away is that this band plays manic and raging-fast punk with precision. Reminds me a lot of Gauze and Systematic Death in vocal delivery and song structures. It's a fearless attack that borders on collapse, yet they maintain to keep it together long enough to belt out the tunes. Adding a touch of grit is the raw production. It's an 8-track sound that adds a bit of harshness, keeping it from sounding sterile. It is not uncommon that this band flew under my radar. I was a bit disengaged during the '90s. But someone put their money where their love is and compiled this for those who missed out the first time. Wondering what their originals go for

on Ebay? —Donofthedeath (Not Very Nice, chaosonmusica@gmail.com, notverynice.bigcartel.com)

#### **DANGERBIRD / UGH GOD: Split: 45**

DANGERBIRD: You'll hope you've got the record playing at the wrong speed. You'll weep openly when you find you don't. UGH GOD are quirky noise pop reminiscent of a cross between an overly polite version of The Mad and what I think I remember that Tin Huey album sounding like. "It's All Pink on the Inside" is almost decent enough to justify this record's existence. Almost. BEST SONG: Ugh God, "It's All Pink on the Inside." BEST SONG TITLE: Ugh God, "My Sweet Bits." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The person who etched the matrix numbers into the run-off grooves has very good penmanship, as run-off groove etchers go. —Rev. Nørh (SRA)

#### **DANGERBIRD: Self-titled: CD**

##### **DANGERBIRD: Johnny: CD**

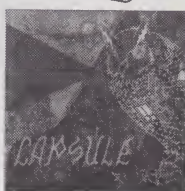
Interesting variant on a style here. They take the sluggish stoner rock tempo, remove the heaping dollops of Sabbath and skunk weed, and replace it instead with a different '70s band vibe I can't quite place. Still heavy, but the sound is a bit brighter and less caustic. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dangerbird, dngrbrd.com)

#### **DARK AGES: Can America Survive?: LP**

Some good hardcore here, alternating between slow and fast tempos, with an occasional jerky-jerky delivery to keep ye on yer toes. The lyrics are



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relatively simple and repetitive—but by no means mindless—and address conformity, aggression, and religion's effect on American society, all in a way that makes a point without a soapbox. Snazzy giant newsprint poster, too. In all, good, creative, and a step off from the herd, as a good punk band should be. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

**DEFECT DEFECT / FOREIGN OBJECTS / DAYLIGHT ROBBERY:**  
**3-way split: 1-sided LP**

It's a three-band show that'd totally rule. Three contemporary punk bands on three different channels, but all on the same wavelength, if that makes any sense. Defect Defect: Colin couldn't be clearer. He's calling out all punks who got "too old" and have "given in." I can almost see his crooked glasses slipping off his face as he sings this. Black Flag? Absolutely. *Damaged*, not *The Process of Weeding Out*. Lines drawn. Tough love. Napalmed babies. I'm down. Daylight Robbery: Sounds like their records come with a spool of police tape that raps around your stereo as it plays. It cordons off a crime scene, sets the place in noir-ish blacks and whites, expands to ten times its original volume, and carefully inspects and detects. Think X, *Los Angeles*, not *Hey Zeus!* Foreign Objects: I blame professional wrestling. When I did a podcast with Bill Pinkel and he played the Foreign Objects, I was like, "Oh, there was an L.A. band called that." No, no there wasn't. It was Legal Weapon. The professional wrestling opposite of a Foreign Object. Although the guitar

plays "Just Another Damn Song" by Bad Brains, this is totally Legal Weapon-y, *Death of Innocence*, not *Squeeze Me like an Anaconda*. Summation: Oh, hell yeah, I hear echoes of bands before. But it's the best echoes, not the questionable ones (that loved the Grateful Dead and hair metal). Run that correct shit up a pole. Great stuff. —Todd (Dirt Cult)

**DIRECT HIT!: Domesplitter: CD**

Shееit, these dudes got a lotta energy. The singer sounds like he's blowin' vocal chords left and right and you can feel 'em just jumping all over the stage with wild abandon. I know this sounds like it'd be a review for a hardcore record or something, but Direct Hit! is basically a pop punk band. They just go for it really hard. A lot of this record comes across like it's a concept album about a zombie invasion, which I would normally think is the stupidest thing ever. (Nothing against zombies per se, shit's just super played-out right now. Time for a new trend, maybe Creature From The Black Lagoon or something...) Somehow it works here though. Fair warning: love or hate these guys, these songs are gonna get stuck in your head. Recommended. —Ryan Horky (Kind of Like, kindoflikerecords.com)

**DIRTY MARQUEE: Self-titled: Cassette**

Really glad I found a cassette player that worked. This is a great little collection of politically-aware songs. All are great for sing-alongs with a group of friends. Folky-punky music in the vein of Andrew Jackson Jihad. Nice harmonies and a solid balance between

the male and female singers. Bonus points for including a small lyric sheet. —Samantha Beerhouse (Self-released, dirtymarquee@yahoo.com)

**DOUBLE NEGATIVE:**

**Hardcore Confusion Vol. 1: 7"**

**Hardcore Confusion Vol. 2: 7"**

Apparently the opening two salvos of what is promised to be a four-release set, these guys know how keep the hardcore hordes drooling—one track on each side here. If you've somehow managed to miss out on them prior, Double Negative are one of those rare bands that can take the hackneyed hardcore template and make it sound fresh and interesting. Their sound has some serious heft to it—with the tempos ranging from four-alarm inferno to slow burners—all of it coming on like a juggernaut. One can hear echoes of the heavyweights of the genre—Poison Idea, Negative Approach, SS Decontrol—buried in the clamor, yet they maintain a sound and style all their own. Folks in the know will be talking about these guys with reverence long after they've gone. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

**DUDE JAMS:**

**How to Abuse Everything: LP**

Everyone knows Dude Jams. They write catchy songs, their occasional live shows are a blast, and after many 7"s and split singles, this record will officially put them on the map. Musically, Dude Jams is like the equivalent of the drug-using, throw-up-on-yourself, drunk, "bad" little brother of Off With Their Heads, except

snottier, drunker, and shittier... and I mean that in a good way. The songs are short, fast, and hook-filled, and anyone into quick, brash punk songs about drinking and drugging will probably love it. —Mark Twistworthy (A.D.D.)

**ELECTRIC BLOOD: Single 2011: 7" EP**

Mellow, shambolic, staggering proto indie rock. It's charming and pleasant stuff. It sounds like a shanty when the organ kicks in. It also sounds non-calculating, small-fi, and small-audience. Having originally been recorded in '82 and '84 in New Zealand; that all makes sense. It features Robert Scott, who went on to be in The Clean and The Bats (see the interview in *Razorcake* #62). It reminds me of cave paintings, at the dawn of independent rock'n'roll when it was just first being called "college rock": crude strokes scratched along the uneven surfaces of culture. But their intent is crystal clear and surprisingly resilient. Thanks for making this much more available—and on vinyl for the first time—Spacecase. Goodonyah. —Todd (Spacecase)

**ENERGY, THE: Get Split: LP**

When the Energy's First Album came out, I distinctly remember being drunk at a party one night endlessly spouting off about that record and this band and how great they are, coming off like a weird version of the Adolescents with a strange, mostly monotone vocalist whose lyrics come off like reading a case study on psychopaths and sociopaths. *Get Split* is their second, LP, and it builds

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upon the first but with better production, and specifically, *much* louder guitars, which in turn makes this more of a "rock'n'roll" record than the first LP. If I were back at that party again drunkenly spouting off about this record instead, I would probably say that they've thrown a little Detroit guitar wankery into the mix, and it works well. The Energy, along with fellow Houstonians MuhammadAli (of which the Energy contains one ex-member of) are two of the best bands in Houston right now, and this record will only help put Houston on the map. —Mark Twistworthy (Team Science, teamsciencerecords.com)

#### FRENCH EXIT:

##### **Worst Case Scenario: 7" EP**

On the cover of this 7", there are four sets of legs, a cinderblock wall five blocks tall, and a cat walking by. In the middle of the background is a can of Tecate on its side. Most telling is that they're standing on what first looks like dying grass. Until you look under the cat's front paws and see a seam in the grass. They're standing on well-worn astroturf, filled with leaves. Who has an outdoor vacuum cleaner these days? French Exit is from Chicago, California. They're standing on the formidable shoulders of bands like the Lawrence Arms (anthemic, self-effacing / self-loathing, catchy crunch) and Weezer. (And since we're all standing here naked with a couple minutes before anything happens, I'm not the biggest Weezer fan, but I pretty much dig punk bands roughing up their rag doll pop as

an influence.) French Exit are definitely growing on me with each successive spin. They come across as a band that, if they stick around, will get tighter, more powerful, and are, ultimately, a much better idea than laying astroturf in your backyard in an effort to save money on water... because that shit gets sad and depressing. Brittle, dirty astroturf. —Todd (Solidarity, solidarityrecordings.com, frenchexit.com)

##### **FUNGI GIRLS: Some Easy Magic: CD**

Garage rock with an extra slice of reverb. The feel is psychedelic—surf music made by dudes who live nowhere near a beach—which might be just about right, as these guys come from the middle of Texas. Fungi Girls are not as aggro as some of their Nuggets-punk compatriots like Ty Segall or The Black Lips. With the hazy vocals and Danelectro-sounding guitars, these guys mine the same high energy, slacker side of the spectrum that the Soft Pack reside on. Think a little bit of Slumberland and Mexican Summer mixed in with their In The Red diet. The eleven tracks on here aren't exactly the model of variety, but they get the job done. All in all, a fine listen whose cool vibe almost screams for you to throw on some Ray Ban sunglasses. —Adrian (Hozac, hozacrecords@gmail.com)

#### GEHENNA:

##### **Land of Sodom II: 7" EP + CD O.D.R.I.E.P.: Flexi**

As anyone who's ever been privy to experiencing their *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris* album can

attest, one doesn't so much listen to Gehenna as be assaulted by them. Void is the only band I can think of at this moment that can swim the dark mooshy waters between hyper-speed hardcore and metal in such fucked up ways and not only get away with it, but somehow carve a psychopathic cubbyhole all their own. Wave after wave of bludgeoning sonic virulence comes crashing down on you in short, sharp wallops, and just when you think you're coming up for air, here comes another to drag you gasping down to the bottom. Collected here is a "redux" of an earlier release that apparently had some availability issues when first released, plus a CD with the *Upon the Gravehill* album in its entirety accompanying the tracks from the vinyl. The flexi, a limited edition item available only by ordering the EP directly from the label, consists solely of a barnburner of a cover of DRI's "Yes Ma'am," recorded during the sessions for the aforementioned *Negotium* album. —Jimmy Alvarado (A389)

##### **GENERATORS: Last of the Pariahs: CD**

A step back here from the more "rock" direction of their previous release and a return of sorts to the melodic punk that's been the staple of Doug's bands since forever. The songs here are top notch, the hooks infectious and are so stuffed to the gills with that pitch perfect blend of "sugar oi" and early '80s L.A./OC hardcore that, at times, they veer very close to sounding like Bad Religion in all the best ways possible. Kinda bummed this came in September, 'cause

every damned track is prime summer listening material. —Jimmy Alvarado (DC Jam, dcjamrecords.com)

##### **GET DESTROYED: Shut In: 7" EP**

ADD thrash here: loud, flailing, and fast as fuck with slower breakdowns allowing one to catch a breath. —Jimmy Alvarado (To Live A Lie)

##### **GHOST KNIFE: Kill Shelter, Yes!: CD**

Me, in my room: "Hey man, that sounds like Rookie Sensation Mike Wiebe!" Daryl, in his: "Yeah."

Me: "This isn't the new Gamblers record."

Daryl: "No, Ghost Knife."

Me: "It's not what I was expecting. Didn't they dress up as Juggalos for a Fest?" Three weeks later, we flipped to as who'd review it. It was sitting on the CD player.

Expectations can be corrosive agents. Musically, they can cauterize ears. But with dudes like Weibe and Ben Snakepit and Severed Head Of Chris, I just take the shower in their sprinkler of songs and let it wash over me before I open my yob. After several listens—largely steered by Wiebe's voice and lyrics, this is a straight-up indie pop record made by straight-up punk rockers. And I really like it. See, I'm a fan of the entire Gamblers catalog. I like it when they staple the crowd's collective nuts and vags to their foreheads, but I also think that Wiebe's one of the best songwriters and lyricists in our corner of the world, so I also enjoy the slower stuff... because I like reading and meaning.



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*Kill Shelter, Yes!* is slower, more lush stuff. There's a song sung from a cat's perspective (or is that purr-spective?). The record kept me thinking that if Joe Meno novels if they were set to music. Creative, detailed, kind, paced. My only small "Huh?" is that the graphic design's confusing. It's all Tiki and fancy Polynesian drinks that have little bearing on the tone of the record, but the songs aren't listed in order and some of the lyrics are chopped off. "Hey Man, who stuck their Antioch Arrow/Built To Spill/Modest Mouse into my punk with a dirty finger? Ghost Knife." I'm going to keep this one spinning. Learn some new shit. —Todd (End Sounds)

#### GO WHITE BRONCO:

##### *Life as a Monument: 7"*

Mellow yet impassioned acoustic folk stuff. Guitar playing is quite nice and the songs are catchy. —Jimmy Alvarado (86'd)

#### GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE / LIBYANS:

##### *Split: 7"*

The Libyans play some really straightforward punk reminiscent of early Dead And Gone and the finest moments of Spitboy. Something with bared fangs is emitted from my speakers here. The kind of punk that sounds loud no matter how low you turn it down. The God Equals Genocide side is great. The gang vocals on "We Speak for Ourselves" rule, the lyrics rule, everything they have done rules. God Equals Genocide is still my favorite current punk band. This 7" just gives me another reason. If you like legit,

no-bullshit punk played nasty and loud, look no further. —Rene Navarro (Shock To The System / Dirt Cult)

#### GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE:

##### *3 EPs, 2 Splits, 4CDRs, 2 Tours, 4 T-Shirts, & Now a Tape: Cassette*

Self-described "slop punk" from Los Angeles, CA. As the title suggests, this release collects all their previously released recorded material on one handy dandy yellow cassette. Painfully honest and heart-felt lyrics that warrant no explanation, yelled and sung by co-ed singers who both rip shit up in their own right. You wouldn't know it from the rough and tumble, DIY-as-fuck quality of the recordings, but at least one of the members is a classically trained musician specializing in Balinese gamelan. But as you might have guessed, it isn't the guy who plays the two-string bass. This tape is long sold out from the band but I'm willing to bet a vegan baguette that their French homies from the label that put this out might still have some copies. —Juan Espinosa (Orange Juice, mat.demuylder@gmail.com)

#### HAPPY NOOSE: Self-titled: LP

This one opened with an intro jam that sounded like a punk take on something that fell off one of Ride's early EPs, and it was decorated with samples of Bukowski reading "Born into This." I could have gone for at least half an LP of that, but was stunned at the divergence that followed. After the intro, Happy Noose (like "happy news"?) steers clear of anything like shoe-gaze territory, save

the kinda heady punk outro. Between the bookends are eight tracks of slackerific pop punk, with vocals that at times have a slightly despondent and unaffected charm that fit really well. Definitely one of the best things I've gotten for review—which I didn't have any prior knowledge—in a while. —Vincent (Dead End Social Club)

#### HEMENDEX: *Reset 2: CDEP*

According to the label's site, the band's name is a broken English approximation of "ham and eggs," which immediately warms my blackened little heart to these Croatian electro-rapscallions. A synth-based sound, with more traditional instruments rounding things out, is the order of the day here, with songs that show evidence of no shortage of '80s post punk and assorted new wave singles crammed into their respective collections. While not ratcheted up to the levels of, say, the Screamers or Nervous Gender, the bulk of the five songs here are aggressively delivered, with a detached vocal style that occasionally sounds like Devo on a cold wave bender. —Jimmy Alvarado (Geenger, geengerrecords.com)

#### HOLLY AND THE NICE LIONS:

##### *Let's Get Wild!: CD*

Lynchpins of the sputtering Green Bay music scene ((and living maybe two miles from me)), Holly and the Nice Lions politely append a rhythm section ((consisting of two members of Beach Patrol)) to a core nexus ((consisting of one member of Holly Trasti)) to yield a sort of quasi-punkified electrified

variant on the alt-pop female singer/songwriter theme, occasionally veering into the alt-countryisms for which i've always assumed the genre was known ((although i'll admit i have no idea what i mean when i use the prefix "alt-" and i was more of a Mac guy anyway)), but usually sounding more like Chrissy Hynde's cute little sister ((er...i guess that would be more like "Chrissy Hynde's cute daughter" at this late date)) fronting the Dead Milkmen or something, except for "Biologies (us vs. art)" which just sounds like Holly after being punched in the head by D.J. Lebowitz and suffering temporary but severe brain damage, and "Ode To A Young Girl" which sounds like some kind of attempt at a feminist Led Zeppelin, but I always thought Robert Plant sang like a lesbian anyway, so in the grand scheme of things that's really nothing noteworthy. The lack of overt ((i.e., monied to any degree of noteworthiness)) production values usually doesn't hurt the overall project, as Holly's guitar chops and adorably plugged-up singing voice aren't really sonically wowing enough to be the music's selling point in and of themselves ((put in a slightly less insulting way, "it's all about the tunes, dude")), but the album's two standout tracks—"Coyotes" and "Two Way Street"—are veritably crying out for some serious lovin', recording-budget-wise. The marchy beat of "Coyotes" evokes delirious campfire visions of some sorta female Adam Ant rocketing to MTV superstardom circa 1982 ((or maybe if Chrissy Hynde was the maid in the "Goody Two Shoes")

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video and kicked Adam in the nuts and stole his microphone), but "Two Way Street" is legitimately amazing—I had heard the song live tons of times, but had always assumed it was some Stax/Volt thing that I was too lame/caucasian to know ((especially since they were playing that Stax/Volt box set all afternoon long at the last barbecue I went to at Holly's house)). Apparently it's actually an *original*? Who knew? And where did Holly learn all this stuff about all-night-do-right men and testifying and stuff anyway? I always assumed she just sat in her room listening to Sleater-Kinney and practicing guitar and reading Batman graphic novels! Cripes! I mean, seriously! This song's so great it sounds like a cover! Take that as backhandedly as you wish, but if I ran a real record label ((i mean, a REALLY real one, with money and hookers and A&R guys and stuff)), I would throw a fucking PILE of cash at this song, and wait for it to throw piles of cash back at me. Or, if I was one of those guys who runs around trying to get famous singers to record songs written by songwriters whom I represent, I'd be shopping this one in tenacious and persistent fashion until either some big famous person recorded it and made us all a gob of money or they all kicked me in the butt so many times in rejection that they fractured my coccyx and I could not continue my pimping. As neither of these scenarios are the case, the band will have to settle for me playing it repeatedly in my car as I drive to the Red Owl® for peanut butter and horchata mix. So long and thanks for all the Sun Chips®!

**BEST SONG:** "Two Way Street" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Stop Sobbing," because it sounds like that Kinks song the Pretenders covered. Actually, it's really "Tight Tight Tight" but I didn't want to go there. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Holly and the Nice Lions were originally called "Holly & The Non-Italians," but changed their name after a guest appearance by the original drummer of Holly & The Italians ((who, oddly enough, currently resides in Wisconsin, although he has never invited me to any barbecues)) somehow made shit too real for the Holly & The Italians people, who hit Holly #2 & crew with a cease and desist regarding the name, which should go far in explaining this liner note item: "Steve Young does not appear courtesy of Holly and the Italians, but rather the Queen of England."—Rev. Nerb (Memorized Dictionary)

**HOLLYWOOD STUNTS: Self-titled: CD** Little bit o' tribal sleaze and a little bit o' rock, sorta like the Birthday Party trippin' on glam or somethin'. Dunno where they hail from but with a different set o' production values and a time machine that'll take 'em back to 1989, they would've been the fuggin' toast of the Hollywood's grimmer corners. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

**HOLY SHIT! / YOUR PEST BAND: Split: 7" EP**

Milwaukee and Japan grapple it out via split 7". Holy Shit! seems a little slower but the songs definitely benefit with a little more melody and memorability.

Still cranking out the fast'n'spastic hardcore. Some of the best stuff I've heard from them. Plus the best song name I've ever encountered. Ever. I recently saw some video of Your Pest Band and it was mesmerizing. Shirtless Japanese dudes wailing on their instruments and putting everything they got into it. It was an inspiring sight and I've definitely been enjoying these songs since then. They carry the torch in that Japanese tradition of doing what Americans do with double the proficiency. In this case, it's wicked guitar licks and slurred early-Replacements vocals. —Daryl (Small Pool / Snuffy Smiles)


**HONDURAN: Self-titled: 7" EP**

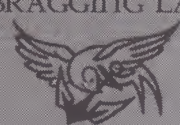

Blamblamgrowl! growl! rooooooaaaaaarr! chugg chugg blam blam!!!! Repeat three more times. —Jimmy Alvarado (Honduran, nothonduran@gmail.com)

**HOSPITAL GARDEN: Haunter: CD**

For a very brief period before it was swallowed whole, gutted, and repackaged by the corporate music leviathan as "indie rock," a term so oxymoronic anymore it makes the brain swim just thinkin' about thinkin' about it, the so-called "Alternative Nation" was free to explore different combinations between punk and whatever could be mooshed in to soften that tired warhorse's increasingly rigid boundaries. From Dead Milkmen to the Replacements to Teenage Fanclub to the Vaselines to Tad to the Butthole Surfers to REM to Babes In Toyland, and so on, a lotta interesting ground

was covered before it all went to shit when the money and drugs got ever more seductive, the lights went out, and it all became less dangerous, to paraphrase some old Northwestern band who ultimately went nowhere. Hospital Garden sound like they just time-warped from the moment that whole scene hit its apex, when the edges were coated with a perfect amount of pop to make the poison go down. You get Hüsker-aggressive guitars, laid back Stipe-ish vocal delivery, and a blend of harmony and dissonance that recalls both the punkier edge of early grunge and bands like Poster Children. I could be totally cynical and opine that in this era when the corporate overlords are trying their best to force-feed a starving populace the hollowed shell of grunge to make yet another quick buck because no one's buying the latest swill they're cookin' no matter how cheaply priced it is, a band like this should handily find a place on the revival circuit. Lord knows I've said much worse before in other weak attempts at a cheap joke. Problem is, though a song here and there might go on just a teensy bit longer than it should, these guys are pretty goddamned good at what they do and—Mahfil strike me down!—they sound so much like a sincere, real band that they stick out like a leper at junior prom. I seriously love 'em to pieces, but they haven't a hope in hell in these times. Here's hoping they don't give a flying fuck and continue to do what they clearly do so well. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hospital Garden)

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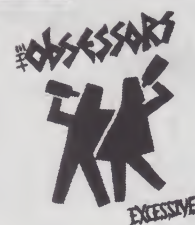
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## HOW DO WE JUMP THIS HIGH?:

### Funny/Not Funny: 7" EP

Very late-'80s Midwestern influence, much like the stuff falling on the alt-rock side of things when that much-ballyhooed and strip-mined genre was just breaking off from punk. Vocals are a bit amateurish without being annoying; the songs are catchy and creative without being pretentious. -Jimmy Alvarado (Answer Key)

### IMPATIENCE: Self-titled: Cassette

Precise, ferocious hardcore that loses none of its momentum for the fact that it's recorded very well. A Milwaukee band made up of people from Protestant and Enabler (among others), Impatience is playing a dark, pummeling variant of hardcore easily on par with bands like Tragedy and Totalitär. Moody, atmospheric, and a little bit scary; this is a fine release. -Keith Rosson (Sacred Plague)

### IN DEFENCE: Party Lines and Politics: LP

Near the tail end of our grade school years, my friend Jon and I took our music nerdery to a whole new level. We created the Boppin' Barney and Matter-of-Fact Matt radio show. Of course, this was not a real radio show. This was us sitting in his basement bedroom making goofy DJ voices and gabbing about tunes into a tape recorder. In between our banter, we added songs by holding the tape recorder up to his boombox and playing our favorites by Exodus, Anthrax, Metallica, S.O.D. and whatnot. If Boppin' Barney and I had

gotten our hands on this new In Defence record, I have no doubt that it would have gotten many spins on the show. Seeing two songs with "mosh" in the title, how could we have passed it up? Our still-developing music nerd brains probably would have described it as a moshterpiece of thrash. "Perfect for the pit!" we would have said, having never actually experienced a pit before. We probably would have spent a lot of time "practicing" our headbanging to songs like "Life in the Thrash Lane." We probably would have jumped around until we were dizzy. Then we would have eaten a box of mac and cheese, gone out into the woods and shot some other kids with BB guns, all while this album ran through our little brains. -MP Johnson (Profane Existence)

### JACK OBLIVIAN: Rat City: LP

Listening to any of Jack Oblivian's songs makes me think of noir author Jim Thompson: songs from the wrong side of the track, about people a little past gone with no hope of coming back. But these people have some heart, if only anyone would listen ("Girl with the Bruises," "Dark Eyes.") The man can wring a searing tone out of his guitar (watch how he bends those strings next time you see him live). Some real boogie blues, but don't think Grand Funk Railroad. This here is a solo Jack O. record but features members of his on-off band, The Tennessee Tearjerkers. -Sal Lucci (Big Legal Mess)

### JEREMY PORTER & THE TUCOS:

#### Night on the Town: 7"

Porter, former front man to The Regulars plus a slew of other Michigan outfits, has reunited with former band mates to form The Tucos. Back in the saddle, they deliver three solid tracks on glacier blue vinyl showcasing their range from power pop to country. The title track is straight up fun with Porter's vocals reminding me of Beck at times, plus hurtling drums and ebullient rhythm; everything a night on the town should be, right? "Ain't My House Anymore" is the game changer with a jangly bluegrass guitar structure and Porter sounding more like Tom Petty, where "Galveston," the bonus song that comes with the MP3 download, is a country-inspired love letter. Recommended for those who appreciate the Telecaster's twang. -Kristen K. (Magwheel, magwheel.com)

### JOHN WESLEY COLEMAN III / FOLLOWED BY STATIC: Split: LP

An Italian release that acts like 7"EPs on a split LP. John Wesley Coleman III's EP *Personality Pancake*: It's melodic and it's freaking out. Around the corners and in its heartbeat, I hear Hasil Adkins and Bob Log III. A full-band one-man-band? Appreciated outsiders with insuppressible "yips" and "yops!" all laid down on a shaky bed of howling, hollow bodies, throbbing embers, and a roiling ocean of reverb. Somehow relaxing and high pressured at the same time. Followed By Static's *Bacon Bear*: Sitting on its haunches, ready to strike with cobra strikes of reverb and

skronking trumpet. They do a nice job of sounding both languid and paranoid. It's a funny coincidence that one guy in this band's first name is Jeffery and another guy's is Pierce, because the band sounds like the ghosts of Jeffrey Lee Pierce's Gun Club hangs in their closet next to their collared shirts. They sweat that same sorta sweat. Both bands. Nice. -Todd (Way Out There, wayouththererecords@gmail.com, wayouththererecords.blogspot.com)

### JOSH DOBBS & HIS DEFICIT OF DREAMS / GHOST AQUARIUM: Split: 7"

Fresh out of Florida and served on mossy green vinyl, these two bands serve up two very different sides of the same coin. Dobbs, front man to The Runnamucks, turns away from his signature sound but still brings the same teeth-grinding angst. "Deficit of Dreams" has a slower, bluesy rhythm, plus a few keyboard notes thrown in, while "Dial Tone" is a jab at the ubiquitous cell phone (I'm looking at you, Todd). Ghost Aquarium's "Despite the Vices" is a nod to their affinity to goth rock with a sinister, prowling-in-the-shadows vibe and '80s guitar solo, whereas "Enough Time to Live" is a lighter, post punk, body slamming track. The sound quality isn't killer, but don't let that detract you from picking up an awesome split from two different but equally talented bands that are steering clear of that 4/4 rhythm cookie cutter punk. Recommended. -Kristen K. (Ripping, mspace.com/rippingrecords)

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**JUST URBAIN: *Everybody Loves: 7"***

Thought for a second the band decided to unleash another two hundred copies of their second EP some thirty-one years after its initial release, but on closer inspection, it looks as though the folks responsible for 540 Records and Chaos in Tejas are the guilty parties. The performance is straight outta Brisbane, Australia circa 1980, and is barely adept rock with the odd piano thrown in to give things some sophistication. The closing title track made it onto one of the later Killed by Death comps, and with good reason. —Jimmy Alvarado (540, [timmy@chaosintejas.com](mailto:timmy@chaosintejas.com))

**KNIFEY SPOONY: *Self-titled: 7" EP***

The opener, "Art Show Press Pass," is a bit of thrashy punk with a bit of sly sophistication buried under the sloppy sound. "Retro Poser Enema" throws maybe a smidge of psychedelia into the crash-bang, and they close things out with a cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Hey Tonight." More fun than it would appear and much better than it has any business being. Great artwork, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (Orifice Dorm)

**KRIG I HUDIK: *II: 7"***

The cover art led me to believe that this was some sort of Kraftwerk-esque synth-driven band, and the back cover—a digitally rendered image that looks like a screen shot from some urban warfare video game with Swedish text—threw me for a loop. Not knowing what I was going to get, I put this thing on and was confronted with an onslaught of old

school Scandinavian hardcore that starts out going a million miles an hour and doesn't let up over the course of the record. This thing is absolutely pummeling: heavy riffs and driving drum beats with coarse, shouted vocals. No melody, no pretense. After some research, I found out that the band is members of Totalitär (who also make a great stylistic reference if you're into them) and Brainbombs, and that the majority of these songs are covers of old Swedish hardcore bands. This thing is spectacular. I don't know how many made their way into the U.S., but it's definitely worth the time to track down if you're even remotely interested in Scandinavian hardcore. —Ian Wise (Skrammel, <http://skrammelrecords.se>)

**LAST RESORT / OLD FIRM CASUALS: *Split: 2 x 7"***

Is Rancid's Lars Frederiksen a phony for going back to his skin past and starting Old Firm Casuals? I don't know and I don't care. What I do know is that his new band is an earnest, well developed project that doesn't seem at all out of place paired up with the legends that are Last Resort. An essential 21<sup>st</sup> Century release if ever there was one, this is a perfect mash up of the new and the old. Plus, if one kid gets into Last Resort through this record, a vital community service has been achieved. —Art Ettinger (Oi! The Boat, [oi.theboat.com](http://oi.theboat.com))

**LEBAKKO: *En Tullut Toistamaan Tarinaa Samaa: 7"***

Great Finnish punk/hardcore of the non-Discharge influenced variety, meaning

they're not particularly fast and are devoid of that stereotypical beat, but are catchy as hell with a singer who's just spitting out lyrics coated in venom. One of those instances here when limiting things to just two songs is plain goddamned wrong. More, more! —Jimmy Alvarado (PML, [pikakelauskellamaailmanloppuun@gmail.com](mailto:pikakelauskellamaailmanloppuun@gmail.com))

**LENGUAS LARGAS: *Self-titled: 12"***

Lenguas Largas is a band that, firstly, should be seen to be believed. Four guitars, two drummers. Brothers and old friends, made up of some of the best dudes from the best bands over the last ten years (and more). All of those things coalesce into what is the most daring and inventive band in punk right now. The guitars weave in and out, creating an expansive, vibrant tapestry of sound, which is pierced by Isaac's soulful yowl and then punctuated by the two drummers pounding away in unison. Spacey and lazy daydreams here; frenetic and harried bursts of rock and roll shrapnel there; a low and slow burning ragout that comes to a boil, opening up hidden flavors and fragrances. Amazing is a superlative that I often find overused, as well as often used incorrectly, but in this instance there is no better way to describe the greatness that is Lenguas Largas. —Jeff Proctor (Tic Tac Totally / Recess)

**LIMES, THE: *Tarantula: LP***

It is hard not to compare The Limes to The Modern Lovers. Songwriter Shawn Cripps talk-sings his sentiments in a flat manner that combines lazy charm with

understated poetry. Most of the album moves at the pace of The Modern Lover's "Pablo Picasso." The guitar playing is authoritative and undistorted. The Limes have such an excellent vocabulary of measured rock riffs that the record rocks without moving above a gallop. But most endearing about the album is the unique take on Americana. We need more people singing about the landscape. Many acts that attempt this style mistake drinking and dysfunction with interesting. The voice of the album and lyrical content set it apart from the typical affected roots music that seems to be popular right now. —Billups Allen (Goner)

**LOUD SQUIRT:*****Déjà Vu Revue Blues: 7" EP***

Medium-fi trash rock, emphasis on the rock. The tempos are reined in, but the songs are well written and the delivery has the requisite intensity to push this into the "winner" pile. —Jimmy Alvarado (High School Refuse)

**MACHETAZO / MARROW: *Split: 12"***

I like a novelty item like the next person. Record cut like a saw blade? Cool! Even if I hate the record, I would keep it for just that. Yup! I can be a record nerd a lot of the time. Machetazo: Spain-based grindcore band that has kept up the fight since 1994, based on a quick search of the interwebs. They are also a two-piece outfit, which probably keeps things efficient. They're very much like one of my other favorite two-piece bands, Population Reduction; the difference

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being the lyrics are in Spanish and this band delves more into the heavier parts of death metal. All in all, raging. *Morrow*: From the depths of Baltimore, this band belts out the evil-sounding death metal. Pictures of face paint and throwing up devil horns while swinging your hair is the picture that pops up into my deteriorating mind. The music is done with precision and they definitely seem to be proficient in the genre they have chosen. Grind vs. death metal? The grind side is the winner for me. —Donofthedeath (Dysphoria)

#### MALL'D TO DEATH:

##### *The Process of Reaching Out 7"*

When I signed up for reviews, I suppose I should have seen this one coming: two solid label dudes who I'd consider friends release a record that just isn't for me. Not that this is bad... far from it, in fact! Lyrically, I can totally get behind topics like rallying against the digital age or wallowing in self-deprecation, and the musicianship and energy on this album is apparent. It's just that while fifteen years ago I would have been all over this, these days I could take or leave their brand of '90s pop punk with ska influences. If you're a fan of Dun Bin Had or Bomb The Music Industry, this will be right up your alley. It's just leaving me a bit lukewarm. —Chris Mason (It's Alive/GC)

#### MAN...OR ASTRO-MAN:

##### *Your Weight on the Moon. CD*

A reissue of a 10" EP, plus the tracks from the *Mission to Chaos* and *Return*

to *Chaos 7"* EPs. I profess to have little to no real knowledge about this band, which is a *huge* oversight on my part. I have no real explanation why, seeing as everything I've ever heard by 'em I dug, but, nonetheless, they're one o' them bands I always promised I'd pay more attention to but never actually got around to picking up any of their stuff. By the sound of it, these are from relatively early in their career, with virtually no synths in evidence and all but one of the nineteen tracks are surfy instrumentals with a beefy, punky sound and a lot of audio samples from assorted movies and television shows. If that sounds right up your alley but, like this dolt, haven't taken the time to give 'em proper adulation, I suggest you get to it, bucko. —Jimmy Alvarado (Overground)

#### ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES:

##### *Sing in Japanese. CDEP*

That title is no misnomer there, kids; they do indeed warble profusely in that fair country's native tongue. Funny, but I've always wondered what these guys would sound like if they did originals, and I reckon this is about as close as it's gonna get to that. This is one of those rare moments when I know fuck all about any of the covers they're coverin', but the band's charm and uncanny ability to keep modern pop punk's curse of "let's increase our irrelevancy by sounding more and more like each other" completely at bay. No surprise, considering this is the same band that managed to make Barry Manilow sound good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat)

#### MEHKAGO NT:

##### *Massive Fucking Headwounds. LP*

Dark, brooding, downtuned hardcore, these dudes pretty much seem to be glowing with hate on this one. They're certainly convincing, I'll give em that. As far as I can tell, they pretty much despise everything, but especially fashion punks and religious sects. These are slow, droning, punishing songs, with blazing thrash attacks scattered throughout. The cover art's got a bunch of dudes at a show surrounding the singer and, yep, every single one of them is bleeding from the noggin. Something tells me I would most assuredly *not* be able to handle a pit at a Mehkago NT show. —Keith Rosson (To Live A Lie)

#### MIDWEST BEAT, THE: *Back to Mono 7"*

So much emphasis has been put on the "budget rock" end of the '60s influence thang that when something like this comes along it's almost like a breath of fresh air. Four tunes of smart, jangly stuff that owe as much to the Paisley Underground bands of the '80s as the psychedelic groove merchants of the '60s. Catchy and well executed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Eradicator)

#### MIDWEST BEAT, THE: *Gone Not Lost LP*

Not sure if this came out before or after their recent *Back to Mono 7"*. Midwest Beat is tight as hell but manage to sound like a shambolic, sing-a-long basement party band. I still need to see 'em live. I don't know what to call their sound—countrified power pop? Something that could only come from

the Midwest. There are lots of layers on this album and I hear more each listen—great vocal harmonies and guitar melodies. There's nary a second to breathe between songs, keeping the energy high. If rock'n'roll was a three-course dinner, I'd pair Midwest Beat with Box Elders and Goodnight Loving. —Sal Lucci (Dusty Medical)

#### MIGHTY MIDGETS / REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC MAN / FIST OF THE NORTHSTAR / BROKEN ARIS:

##### *Four Band Split. CD*

Mighty Midgets: Vaguely technical, melodic hardcore that's kind of like A Wilhelm Scream, but from Sweden. Revenge of the Psychotronic Man: The band that I picked this CD up for. These guys are awesome. Rowdy-sounding British dudes playing really fast with just enough appreciation for melody to hold things together. I loved their *Make Pigs Smoke* album from a while back, and this delivers more of the same. Think of these guys as the burlier second coming of Snuff. Fist Of The North Star: Dudes from Nashville who turn in four tracks of melodic hardcore/skatepunk. Pretty good, but it goes by in a blur of double picking and harmonics due to being on the back half of the CD. Broken Aris: This Swedish band sounds exactly like early Rise Against, but with a really, really distracting singer. Think if Feargal Sharkey (Undertones) took a hit of helium and then tried to sing songs from *Revolutions Per Minute*. Yes, it sounds really weird. —Adrian (Stik Man/ 5 Feet Under/TNS)



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**MIKE KROL: *I Hate Jazz*: 10"**

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Holy moly. First record I can think of in recent memory that came from a band that I've never heard of that—as soon as I drop the needle on the record—it blows me away immediately. Internet searches for Mike Krol provide little information other than that he played drums in a couple bands in Wisconsin and Connecticut and makes his living doing graphic design. The design element comes through clearly, as the artwork is quite sharp, with the colors and fonts used uniformly throughout the record, front and back, inside and out. It looks like it could be an early Talking Heads record. Musically, it starts off with a little garagey jingle jangle of the guitar, but then warmly played keyboards and naïf-like vocals come in, and those jingle jangle guitars turn in to rich, full, smartly tuned and timed thrashes and all of a sudden shards of post-punk and indie rock start flying everywhere and it all kind of adds up to something like Atom And His Package with a full band. This is a winner, easily the MVP of the new batch of review materials. White vinyl, hand-numbered, and comes with download card. —Jeff Proctor (Counter Culture)

**MINUTEMEN / SACCHARINE TRUST: *Split*: 7" EP**

It's very goddamned hard to speak of the stuff on here, because my first inclination is to just gush like some simp fan boy about how truly fuggin' fabulous these bands were and how truly fuggin' mandatory a purchase this is. I

mean, seriously, both took the Southern California hardcore template that was barely being forged at the time these tracks were being recorded, roughly 1980-83, and promptly turned the whole endeavor on its head with liberal doses of funk, groove-mongering, and free jazz. You get three songs from each here, all previously released, but all culled from the now-obscure *Chunks*, *Cracks in the Sidewalk*, *Life Is Ugly So Why Not Kill Yourself* and *Life Is Beautiful So Why Not Eat Health Foods* classic punk compilations, which means you'd have a fucker of a time finding 'em separately and your wallet would take a severe beating the minute you attempted to procure them. Pettibon and Baiza art, lyric sheet, and some of the best music to come out of the United States—you really cannot ask for more. —Jimmy Alvarado (Water Under The Bridge)

**MOTHER'S CHILDREN:*****Are You Tough Enough?*: 12" EP**

A six-song follow-up to their debut record, Ottawa's finest return with a great release. They actually remind me of the Minneapolis's Crash Kids a bit (which is a good thing, trust me). I like "Sabre Tooth" and "What's Your Problem" the best here. There is a reason Paul Collins brought these guys on tour with them. They simply rock, in the best tradition of 20/20 or The Plimsouls. Pick this up and you will be bopping along when you pick up your burger and strawberry milkshake at your local fast food joint. Yum. —Sean Koepenick (Taken By Surprise)

**NAKED AGGRESSION /*****ALL OR NOTHING H.C.*: *Split*: CD**

Despite the fact that they've been around more than twenty years and they're originally from Wisconsin, my home state, I've never actually listened to Naked Aggression. Oops. Thoughtful and intense hardcore poking at the same problems hardcore's been poking at since old times, albeit with a sharper stick than usual. If you haven't heard them yet either, now's a good chance to remedy that problem, especially since they're paired up with the like-minded All Or Nothing H.C. on this split. —MP Johnson (On The Rag)

**NATO COLES AND THE BLUE DIAMOND BAND / KING FRIDAY: *Split!!*: 7"**

Nato Coles: I'm familiar with his work, having done brief tours with the Modern Machines and Used Kids. The Blue Diamond Band is the next step in the timeline of the aforementioned bands, in that it's really starting to channel DIY punk through the Bruce Springsteen/Tom Petty/classic rock'n'roll singer/songwriter filter, as opposed to vice versa. It threw me for a sec, because it was labeled as 33 (which bugs me on 7"s), but thought "this sounds pretty weird for Nate" and, sure enough, it's 45. But the songs are great, and if there's any justice, an incarnation of the Blue Diamond Band will end up with a residency somewhere in Vegas (or some other small desert casino town, probably to Nate's liking). King Friday: Never heard of them before this, even though some research leads me to believe they've been around for a

long time, but I like Florida. The whole aesthetic of the record looks like an old Lookout release, and this band kind of reminds me of a DIY punk Superchunk, with pretty awesome mid-tempo rock with the slightest little guitar intricacies. Plus, the singing reminds me of a Florida version of Mac from Superchunk, which I don't know how to describe, but who cares? It means it's good. Great split all around. —Joe Evans III (ADD)

**NEGATIVE LIFESTYLE: *Panic*: EP**

This trio from Sweden delivers the goods in short blasts of raw and stripped-down, tuneful hardcore punk. There are a few thrashers on here ("M.B.D.," "New Solutions," "No Random Signals," and the title track), but the rest are a touch moodier—and have a little more going on in the structure—from mid to quick tempos, bass-driven breaks, and guitars that come in and out. The whole record is steeped in urgency, which is really noticeable in the vocals (that remind me of Claude Bessy), that have a dry and desperate sound that switches between shouted and spoken. While there are some fast ragers on here, I find the slightly slower songs like "Trying to Fit In," "Radio Silence," and "Reading to Avoid Thinking" stand out more and stay with me later throughout the day. Don't hesitate in picking this one up. —M.Avrq (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

**NERVOUS GENDER: *"Gestalt" b/w "Green Tile Floors"*: 7"**

Both label (Test Tube released 45s by the Zeros and pre-Youth Brigade band

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The Extremes) and band have deep roots in Los Angeles's punk scene, and seeing as both haven't released much in a looooooong time, this also signifies a return to form for both. Both songs date back to 1979, when Nervous Gender was wreaking havoc on unsuspecting punk audiences, but the versions presented here were recorded in late 2009 with most of the founding members in attendance (Gerardo Velasquez passed away in the early 1990s). If you're thinkin' there is no way in hell this could hold a candle to previous classics like the *Music From Hell* LP and their tracks on the *Live at Target* compilation, rest assured the tunes here showcase a group that has not softened a whit with age. Time, experience, and three decades of technological advances may have allowed them to organize the parts a wee bit better, but the chaos, flailing synthesizers, and blunt vitriol of their attack remain in full display both on wax and live, as those who have seen their recent performances can attest. They remain one of the best and most criminally overlooked bands Los Angeles has ever produced, and this release is fan-fucking-tastic. Here's hoping a full-length isn't too far behind this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Test Tube, testtuberecords.com)

#### NIGHT BEATS: Self-titled: CD

The Night Beats clearly have a core stored deep in the garage. Piled on top, though, are healthy heaps of psychedelia and surf, which turns what could've been just another exercise in

faceless '60s nostalgia into a moody and sometimes downright swampy excursion into some of rock's darker corners. Definitely worth the search. —Jimmy Alvarado (Trouble In Mind)

#### NIGHT BIRDS:

##### *The Other Side of Darkness*: LP

Hardcore that really resonates with me has been made by outcasts. And I don't mean one-dimensional, "They don't understand my crew," looking-for-sponsorship outcasts. I'm talking about people who truly don't look or fit the part making fast, hard, palpitating music. I'm talking about misfits within misfits, even at the band level, yet they're all on the same page at the same time, if even just for the length of a record, the duration of a set. They're all in the same chemistry lab, comic book store, record store, and thrift store for that twenty or so minutes. They draw from obscurity and edges and fringes. Look at old Dead Kennedys, Zero Boys, and Void photos. Look at Out Cold. Regular haircuts. Regular T-shirts. Regular-looking. Not funny-looking. Then listen. It's what's trapped inside that's worth listening to for the long haul. They saved all the weirdness and anger and head ventilation for the music. Night Birds run deep—obvious over—and undercurrents are the surf guitar, the breakneck speed, and the smart lyrics. Inside is melody and Woody Allen references, origami-like guitar leads (fancy cuts, intricate patterns), and a drum that jounces and hollers instead of getting locked like a monkey inside the 4/4 cage. They're looking at hardcore

punk laterally—approaching it from the side—and that sounds so much better than a band you can hear flooring it in a straight line through a suburban cul-de-sac with nowhere else to go. Excellent. —Todd (Grave Mistake)

#### NOFX: Self-titled: 10" EP

There's no information included here whatsoever, but this consists of the band running through nine covers of songs originally by Agnostic Front, Necros, Urban Waste, Social Unrest, Battalion Of Saints, Sin 34, Rebel Truth, Stretch Marks, and a tune called "Race Riot," the origin of which is somewhere in the recesses of my noggin but I just can't seem to drag out. Decent performances here, nothing revelatory, but, in all, some nice run-throughs of songs that once seemed ubiquitous when we were all kids running around fucking shit up in backyards and crappy Hollywood dives with sticky floors and roaches running in and out of the PA speakers (::cough:: CATHAY:: cough::), but are now oddly obscure. Getting old sucks, but this doesn't. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat)

#### NOODLE MUFFIN: *Karmic Bitchslap*: CD

The synths and the general "rock" feel of this won't exactly scream "PUNK!" to those whom that word is synonymous only with a certain set of predetermined and preapproved musical templates and value systems, but there is a clear influence in the anarchic way these cats gleefully bounce from one musical subgenre to another in a way that comes off as part reverent, part

creative ribbing, often danceable, and completely demented. This is the third release I believe I've come across by them in the past twelve years, and it's nice to see they're still flying their freak flag with pride, considerably lighter on the politics this time 'round, but no less unique in their vision. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fyoog State)

#### NOTHINGTON: *Borrowed Time*: CD

I saw Nothington so many times around the release of their first album *All In*. Part of it might have had to do with working as an intern at their label at the time, BYO, but I also really liked the band. Then they released a second full length and got kind of quiet. I honestly thought that they had possibly broken up, so I was pleasantly surprised, though a bit wary, to see that they had some new releases on Red Scare. My concern turned out to be completely unfounded because they sound just as strong, if not stronger, than before. They're still doing gruff-voiced punk rock with a tinge of Americana flavoring in their sound, but, if anything, they sound more assured than before. The opener, "Captive Audience," really sets the pace for the rest of the album. "Hopeless," with its slow build, is quite the jam, and probably my favorite. There is not really a duff track on here, as even the tracks where second vocalist Chris takes lead sound more forceful than before. I'm glad to know they haven't watered themselves down like former scene-mates, the Gaslight Anthem. Well, hello, Nothington; it seems like you're back. —Adrian (Red Scare)



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### OBN III's: *Mark on You* 7"

At first glance at the cover, I was expecting just another low-fi garage rock band and was mistaken. Intense and a little off-kilter, OBN III's seem like a band that can't be contained to vinyl and need to be seen live. Mr. OBN III himself is quite the prolific Texan (he plays in The Bad Sports and was on the John Wesley Coleman *Bad Lady Goes to Jail* album too.) The guitar tone on "Mark on You" is searing. "Heavy Heart" is a driving, punk-y garage number. My only complaint is that there are only two songs on this record. —Sal Lucci (Tic Tac Totally)

### OBSERVERS, THE: *So What's Left Now?* LP

Recently re-issued by Taken By Surprise, it never really seemed that hard to find in the States (courtesy of Vinyl Warning), but if there's a record that deserves to stay in print, it's this one. Top 10 record of the '00s without a doubt. Hauntingly flawless melodies mixed with driving, rallying punk rock and intelligent lyrics. And in the end, as much as I love this record and find myself listening to it years later, one of my favorite things is that these guys are still playing in absolutely killer bands. If you don't have this, I highly suggest putting down this magazine and getting your hands on it. And while you're at it track down all the Red Dons, Defect Defect, and Artic Flowers releases you possibly can. —Daryl (Taken By Surprise)

### ONION FLAVORED RINGS: *Unraveling the Past: The First Two Records on One Tape!* Cassette

At last! Another way to listen to one of the best bands in the past decade! Two albums on one cassette! My enthusiasm is not muted by the fact that one of these albums has already been released on cassette! No, this band is so amazing that the mere existence of anything Onion Flavored Rings is the cause for great rejoicing! If you haven't heard this band, allow me to suggest that your present situation is not unlike that of a person who has not heard Dillinger Four or Radon or Screeching Weasel or, dare I say it, Hüsker Dü. You have not heard Steve Funyon sing about quantum physics ("Now we're in a universe expanding/ And it might expand until forever/ Or it might collapse back into nothing/ But what did the Big Bang bang on?")! You have not heard the perfection that is Mr. Funyon's vocals, Erick Lyle's (formerly Iggy Scam) drumming and Paul Curran's bass playing and back-up vocals. The general pop-driven nature of this band might lead a casual listener to overlook the dark lyrical content (for example, "I like you to think I hate everyone/ But I just hate myself."), but that's what makes the Onion Flavored Rings more than just another SF punk band. You can listen to this when you're happy and want to host an impromptu one-person dance party or you can listen to this when you're so depressed that you don't even want to eat Lucky Charms. It's dark, it's poppy,

it's introspective. It's one of my top ten favorite bands of all time. Did I mention that I love this band? —Maddy Tight Pants (Dead Broke)

### ORGANIZED SPORTS: *I'm So Proud of Him* 12"

Speedsters Organized Sports crank out nine tracks of unrelenting hardcore punk, blending the timelessness of Jerry's Kids' *Is This My World?* and the intensity of current flag bearers Direct Control. It's nothing new musically, for sure. Aesthetically, there's a bit more to be desired in the artwork department: a black and white photo of some teen that I imagine is some sort of hero to the band. It doesn't do much for me, especially when the lyrical matter is so bleak and misanthropic. It just goes to show there's no accounting for everyone's taste, but maybe you're a bit easier to please. —Juan Espinosa (Bulkhead / HIV Town, bulkheadrecords@gmail.com)

### OUT ON A LIMB: *Drowned* LP

Out On A Limb are from Germany and play slightly-slower-than-mid-tempo post punk. The band claim Joy Division as an influence, which I hear a little bit, but the danceable drum parts remind me of the Cure for some reason. The feel of the record itself leans more towards bands like Heroin/Unwound/other early '90s Gravity Records offerings, but the post punk influences creep up and become a lot more apparent at times, which makes the listening experience more interesting. The vocals are clean and sort of just hint at melody, and fit in well with the music. I

kept feeling that the vocals sounded a lot like another band I couldn't place until I decided that the accent just reminded me a lot of the Peacocks. The production on the whole record is very subdued, which fits the sound, and the mixing is excellent. —Ian Wise (Taken By Surprise)

### OVENS: *Self-titled* 7"

The searing pop genius of your favorite Weezer album to be sad to meets the unchecked shreditude of your favorite Steve Vai record to get high to. Eight songs on a 45 RPM 7". Anti-Christian imagery everywhere you look. This band has been churning out the hits for years; listed as The Peels on the *Letters from the Landfill* comp, released an undeniable classic on Risk Records, this 7" is so punk that probably no one will like it. Hammers. —Daryl (Catholic Guilt, catholicguiltrecords@gmail.com)

### P.S. ELIOT: *Sadie* LP

I must say that I was stoked to see this in my box of review materials, as I found P.S. Eliot's *Living in Squalor* 7" to be rather splendid. While *Sadie* is good, it is a departure from *LiS*. This LP is a good record, but I was looking forward to an LP's worth of their angsty alternapunk that I heard on the Freedom School 7". The LP's tempo is comparatively slower. A few songs have powerpop-sounding guitar slowed down to the pace of coffeehouse indie rock (I don't mean that to be pejorative in this case). While nothing on here sounds like it is the victim of restraint, the overall feel of *Sadie* is subdued.

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This will be getting more spins on my turntable in the future, but not as much as the *Squalor* EP. —Vincent (Salinas)

#### PANGAEA: *Living Dummy*. LP

Sleazy but friendly, poppy but rocky tunes that have finally crawled their way out off the most homogenous shadows of suburbia and gotten some long overdue recognition. While a couple tracks conjure visions of hipsters absent-mindedly bouncing their youth away, there are songs on here that puncture your soul with harpoon-esque procession and pull you onboard. Over the years, this band has seen many transformations, and I can proudly say I was there for them. And while they often left me scratching my head, there's no denying they give the people what they want. Catchy, danceable pop music firmly rooted in the underground. Somewhat fucked up tunes, for somewhat fuck ups. I often wonder and worry that all my friends and all my favorite bands are just a phase, and one day I'll wake up they'll all be gone. And while in the past the remedy for such worries might have been something from the Pangea demo that was handed to me in a backyard in North Hollywood circa 2004, now I drop the needle on "Haunted," a song that embraces the present and future with equal skepticism and knowledge that nothing is certain. But you are in total control of your life. This record isn't for everyone. It's not even really punk, but there is some great shit on here. —Daryl (Burger / olFactory)

#### PARASITE DIET:

##### *God Hates Parasite Diet*. 7"

Silly pop punk on the Queers side of things! Hooray! Songs about girls, girls, and buying a rocket! Plus, for those who care about such things, they include a Daniel Johnston drawing on the back cover. Bonus points! This could've (and would've) been on Mutant Pop back in The Golden Age, but it wouldn't have been as good as, say, the Proms, but it wouldn't be as bad as, I don't know, the Connie Dungs late-period emo-ish bullshit! Information note: the band is from Kentucky. One song features a girl singer, perhaps out of a desire to emulate the Joe Queer/Lisa Marr pairing. Marketing note: If I were this band, I would hope to appeal to the Teenage Bottlerocket enthusiast! One complaint: Most of these songs are too long. If this were a cereal, it'd be Apple Jacks. All of the essential ingredients are there, and it deserves to be in the cereal rotation, but it's not at the Cinnamon Toast Crunch level. —Maddy Tight Pants (Pug Face, thePugFace@gmail.com)

#### PEGS, THE:

##### *Nobody's Listening Anyway*. 7" EP

"Bad life decisions" punk. No matter where music tastes take me, I need my monthly dosage of intravenously, fucked-tooth, pants-uncomfortably-tight, no-thinking, probably-bleeding-somewhere—maybe internally, Orange County degenerate punk to cleanse the palate and watch the bad tattoos spread across my skin like happy magic. If you've heard the Stitches mixed with

the Crowd, you've heard the Pegs. If you like Hostage Records, you've heard the Pegs. And that's not a bad thing and this is a good 7". I mean, for fuck's sake, when you go to a restaurant, go for the shit you'll most likely like, right? Not some fucked-up fusion with capers and fennel and indie pop sticking out the side like a flaccid dong about to poke you in the eye. Don't tell me I'm alone on this. —Todd (Rapid Pulse / No Front Teeth, nofrontteeth.net)

#### PENTRATORS, THE:

##### *Gotta Have Her*. 7" single

Originally released in 1976 on Fred Records, this Syracuse outfit cranked out some righteous proto-punk that today would be lumped under the KBD umbrella. "Gotta Have Her" has a surf rock influence running throughout. I like how the singer opens the song with introducing the band to Syracuse listeners, then, as the song goes on, he talks between verses, pushing the song along and gives it more attitude. "Baby, Dontcha Tell Me" has a bit more snarl in the delivery. As it should, from the title. The words are almost growled at points and convey the frustration of being told what to do when you don't want to hear it, ya know? Limited to five hundred. —M.Avr (Windian, windianrecords.com)

#### PINK REASON: *Shit in the Garden*. LP

Pink Reason is not a shape changer. True, if you pick any two Pink Reason songs at random, chances are they are going to sound completely different. Well, completely different, except that they'll

both sound one-hundred percent like Pink Reason. Because Pink Reason is not a shape changer. Pink Reason is a hunger that consumes sounds and makes them its own, shapes them into songs unlike anything you'll hear on any other record. Sparse acoustic guitar work collides head-on with walls of harsh electronic noise on "Sixteen Years." Instruments that I can't even name (Rusty fences being opened and shut? Amplified wind? Exploding computers?) are paired with sounds that have appeared on vinyl since vinyl first appeared, sounds that come and go with logic and no logic at all, and it's all Pink Reason, and somehow it's even more than that. These are songs that desperately need to be heard, but don't care if they're ever heard or not. —MP Johnson (Stiltbreeze)

#### POISON PLANET:

##### *Bleed for Me*. 7" single

Apparently, this was pressed up for their recent European tour. I was hoping for some new material from these guys. Instead, we're given a couple Dead Kennedys covers. They chose doing these to illustrate how relevant the lyrics are some thirty years later, and while I tend to agree, I think it would have been better to write a song or two of their own that would inspire today's generation to think and question, much in the same way the DKs did for some of us thirty years ago. Performance-wise, Poison Planet does a decent job. It's strange hearing these songs a bit heavier, faster, and thrasher. I'd say this is for completists,

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**PRETTY BOY THORSTON AND THE FALLING ANGELS: 21 Songs, Rarities, Live Songs and Unreleased Tracks. CD**

I might have squealed like a little girl when I received this to review. I'm not ashamed to admit it, and think any self-respecting PBT & FA fan would have done the same thing. Great covers and excellent live recordings that demand you sing along in your best whisky-soaked, cigarette-stained growl. Pick this up if you already know and love the band. It's great to have on shuffle. It's like you win with whatever song is chosen! Extra love for the picture of Jesse Thorston in the booklet wearing an "I'm Still Straight Edge" shirt. —Samantha Beerhouse (ADD)

**PROLETARIAT PUNCH: Resistance Is Our Right. Cassette**

Reminds me of Mouth Sewn Shut for the fact that they vacillate between crusty hardcore and pretty convincing reggae. I know most people would positively despise a combination like that, but I personally think it's a fun formula. (I think Citizen Fish is great, too.) Proletariat Punch attacks both genres with surety. Stridently political and nicely balanced. I dig. —Keith Rosson (Recluse)

**PUFFY AREOLAS: Gentleman's Grip: 7"**

This recording comes across as chaotic noise punk where echo-laden vocals are framed by overdriven guitars.

"Gentleman's Grip" has an infectious repetitive riff. The echo on the vocals causes the singer to hover a bit over the recordings. That sort of thing in generally a negative for me, but in this case it works as a growl-howl over chaos. I don't know if this is what the band sounds like live, but the recording is interesting. The guitars are so overdriven that it creates a din as if Karp took a Butthole Surfers record to the studio as a reference. "Psychomania" has the same sort of dynamic though the song is more structured and metal-sounding. I might be over thinking the experimental nature of this recording. Whether it is intentional or not, it works. —Billups Allen (HoZac)

**RAMSHACKLE GLORY:**

**Live the Dream. CD**

Honestly, I really don't care for "folk punk" all that much. Most of it comes across as either too discordant (some acoustic jerkwad crooning nasally) or—the opposite end of the spectrum—cutesy (some acoustic jerkwad crooning nasally about, say, dumpster diving), there's a few bands that avoid all the pitfalls and just rule. The Taxpayers are one, The Wild's another. They—and, as I just found out, Ramshackle Glory—are doing stuff that's couched in folk sensibilities, is also smartly political without sloganeering, and still rock out pretty goddamn hard. Combining instrumentation as varied as banjo, piano, saw and violin, as well as the usual armament, *Live the Dream's* got a great thing going on here. When done poorly, folk punk is some wincingly bad stuff. When it's done well, the songs

are as moving as any more "standard" punk anthem. This is a good record. —Keith Rosson (DIY Bandits)

**RANK/XEROX: Self-titled: LP**

Excellent post punk from this outfit, who are definitely one of the current bands I'm stoked about. The songs have a minimal quality about them, allowing everything to have its own strong identity. They sometimes blur together when the music builds with tempos and jangly, clanging guitars. I like that the drums figure up front in the mix with the bass just below. Things move at a mainly mid-tempo pace, though they do kick up the speed on songs like "Discipline." One song that stands out in particular is "You Might Follow." It starts off with some odd sounds from a synthesizer; from there musically it goes into *Pornography-era* Cure. A bit more texture and darkness than the rest of the songs on an already dark and textured album. As I listen to this album, I'm struck by how truly great it is, and the fact this band is happening now. For fans of Airfix Kits, Section 25, and the sort. Actually, for fans of good music. —M.Avrq (Make A Mess, [makeamessrecords.com](http://makeamessrecords.com))

**RAT COLUMNS: Self-titled: EP**

This is one of those records that is so great and engaging that it puts you right in the moment. Members of Burning Sensation, Rank/Xerox, and Total Control get together and create excellent post punk that draws influences from the greats. "I Wonder" is poppy, though a bit dark and moody, mixing New

Order with the Church. It's the sort of song perfect for rainy afternoons. "Keep Waiting" is fuzzed out and dark, similar to *Loveless* My Bloody Valentine. I like the minimalism of "Glass Coffin" and how it sounds like nothing else on the record, yet it fits. As the song progresses, they add more sound. It gets noisier and more disjointed as it goes. "Darkness" has a definite Joy Division *Unknown Pleasures* vibe: sparse guitars with a cold tone, driven by the bass and drums. Hearing this song made my day. It's great; how it builds and reveals itself over the course of a few minutes. The vocals are somewhere between a whisper and a murmur. I know I'm making comparisons to some great bands out there, but the influences are influences, and this record is great. The more I listen to this, the more I'm of the opinion this is one of the best of the year. —M.Avrq (SmartGuy, [info@smartguyrecords.com](mailto:info@smartguyrecords.com), [smartguyrecords.com](http://smartguyrecords.com))

**RAW NERVE: Midnight 7"**

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that this is the best record Raw Nerve has put out. I say that with a few weeks of listening to it pretty consistently, so that "newness" has worn off. They take complete advantage of the 7" format here, cramming eight songs on this little piece of wax, including a re-recording of their last single, "Nervous Habits." The music is heavier than their previous records, and the tempos vary more, adding a whole new layer of intensity to their already chaotic sound. The lyrics on this record feel a lot more

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organic and fluid; the repetition of lines in the spoken word parts on each side sort of tie the whole record together as a whole conceptualized unit. I feel like if the band had tried to pull off another LP at this point in their development, it would have come across as overly ambitious and watery, but it's nice to see that they channeled the energy and ideas that would have gone into a full length into a much less intimidating format. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack)

#### RAW POWER: *Screams from the Gutter/After Your Brain*. CD

Weird time, the '80s. Dunno if the same rings true for the average American punker of today, but back then it seemed that a good chunk of the mohawked masses were tuned in to what their brethren in other states and countries were doing. I know that many of us in East Los were just as aware of bands like Mob 47, Indigesti, Solución Mortal, Gism, as we were Minor Threat, Big Boys, Hüsker Dü, and so on. Italy's Raw Power was one of the heavyweights on the '80s international punk scene, thanks in no small part to their mind-blowing track "Fuck Authority" on MRR's seminal *Welcome to 1984* compilation, and their *Screams from the Gutter* LP originally (and still on—Westworld is effectively the same label) released by Toxic Shock in 1985. The latter came just as the whole metalcore/speed metal thang was just starting to really get some wind in its sails, and the metal-tinged guitars over crazed hardcore lent credence to their chosen moniker and

earned 'em much love from both sides of the punk/metal chasm. The production of their 1986 follow up, *After Your Brain*, zaps a wee bit of the sonic boom out of the guitar sound, but the strong songwriting is still very much accounted for. Conspicuously absent are the tracks from the *You are the Victim* seven-incher that was released between albums, but don't let that dissuade ye. If you're on a budget but really wanna get acquainted with these cats, I'd say your best bet is to procure this CD and the *Burning the Factory* CD, which consists of a smokin' earlier demo and a live set, and you're pretty much in the deep end of the pool. Classic stuff in every great sense of the term. —Jimmy Alvarado (Westworld)

#### RED DONS: *"Forced Turning Point" b/w "Se Foi": 7"*

There is a small hand of punk bands that are unmistakably down that, I'm sure, would have a very wide appeal among people who "used to like punk" or "outgrew punk," as well as, "Oooh, what's this punk stuff about?" people. I'm not talking about the Rancid/Green Day axis of mainstream appeal. I'm talking the potential Fugazi levels of sustainability—large level, international underground level. Because the Red Dons are instantly catchy, smart-as-all-hell, musically interesting, and so big and realized in sound, that I'm hard-pressed to think of a band with a largesse of morals that equals the excitement of the music they're currently making. For those who like: punk and/or punk and celebrating under that huge fuckin' umbrella.

Untouchable and worth hunting down? Absolutely. —Todd (Taken By Surprise)

#### RESIST CONTROL: *Dissipation: 7"*

Fuck yeah! Resist Control plays furious fastcore that immediately reminded me of Scholastic Deth as well as contemporaries like Low Threat Profile and Coke Bust. Eleven songs (at 45 RPM!) of unrelenting blast beats (goddamn, this drummer kills!) and politically-charged lyrics. What more do you need? —Chris Mason (Shock To The System/Feral Kid)

#### RUMSPRINGER / SHANG-A-LANG:

##### Split: 7"EP

Rumrunner: You know what I like? When you read along, it's all, "Shit, man. Life's a black hole. All my socks have holes. All my relationships have holes." But when you listen to the tone, pacing, and you just mimic the words, it sounds so, "Hell yeah, man! Every day's an endless series of high fives! I communicate clearly, efficiently, and in a way that's no one's ever uncomfortable with what I'm sayin'! Huge slices of awesome pie for everyone!" That's what I like. That dichotomy of light and dark, of shadows and sunlight. One long, epic song from the boys of Coolidge, AZ. Shang-A-Lang: Can I shed that one tear now, a little prematurely? Is it a bit too much if I say Shang-A-Lang breaking up is like someone littering my sacred ground? Should I say that, or should we solicit the "Smithsonian of Punk" to enshrine Chris's 4-channel recorder? There's one more 7" on the horizon

and then the van's officially launched over the side of the cliff. If duct tape was a sound... sigh... broken bottles, low expectation/high yield punk never sounded better. —Todd (Dirt Cult)

#### SATAN'S CHEERLEADERS:

##### *Hell Is for Hippies*. CD + DVD

Sometimes these "discography" discs are quite interesting, because they offer the opportunity to see a group of fledgling musicians, in this case four punkers hailing from somewhere in 1980s NY, find their sound. The band's name has "the original" prefixed right above it, ostensibly to prevent confusion between these cats, who existed 1983-85 or so, and the band that put out a buncha vinyl on Sympathy For The Record Industry years later. The forty-one tracks here come from three different demos, one from each of their years of existence. The first, *Created in Your Image*, is a straight-up garage recording, with thrashy tempos and howled vocals spit out via a raw-as-fuck recording, resulting in a sound that sits somewhere between early Adrenaline OD and Connecticut legends Seizure. The second demo, *Bark Twice for Freedom*, reins in the chaos a bit—though the tempos are still largely zippy, the tunes show a wee bit more sophistication—and the recording sounds like a more traditional four-track affair. By the third, the heretofore unreleased *Hell is for Hippies*, however, the band has tempered their hardcore with a sound that might be comparable (if one was really stretching) to, say, the Minutemen, albeit with a helluva lot less



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funk and a helluva lot more Beefheart. Though each era is not without its charms, for my money this last bit of mania is the real gem here, where the band took those early influences and forged a sound that was all their own. *Hippies* was a demo for an album that, apparently, was never recorded, which is a damned shame 'cause it would've easily been considered a classic of punk's freakier fringe, based on what's here. The DVD is footage of the band thrashing up a thirty-plus minute set in their garage, with sound that's raw but discernable. —Jimmy Alvarado (Welfare)

#### SCAM, THE: *Sic World*: CD

A compendium of recordings here from a New Hampshire band active 1985-90. Collected here are their first demo, the *Everything Ends in Rot* EP, the heretofore unreleased *Sic World* LP, and assorted compilation and live tracks. Their sound places them squarely within the trends of the years of their existence—primarily hardcore punk with enough assorted hues of metal to make the song lengths longer, the structures a bit more complex, and the guitars beefier. They even manage to keep the wanking to a bare minimum. The result is a dark sound that varies between mid-tempo to up-tempo and a singer that sounds like he's well versed in Bathory's back catalogue. —Jimmy Alvarado (Welfare)

#### SEA OF SHIT: *Self-titled*: Cassette

Disgustingly heavy power violence from Chicago. The bulk of these songs hover around thirty seconds to a minute, and

it finishes off with a three-minute death march that, thankfully, doesn't follow the sludge formula you see far too often to close out power violence releases. The vocals are a distorted take on Lack Of Interest and the drums provide a calculated backbone to the chaos. The recording is above average and the guitar tone is sick. If this band had put out a split with Eunuch, I wouldn't have to buy another power violence record for a year. By the time you read this review, the tape will be available as a 7". —Ian Wise (Kills You)

#### SELF MADE MONSTERS:

##### *One Man Race*: CD

I clearly remember liking the forty-five they released a good while back, and the formula here's the same as it was there—simple, pounding rock/punk stompers with guttural, primal vocals. Somehow, though, this just ain't registering like it should. Could totally be my mood, so I'll take full blame, but I wholly expected this to blow me outta my seat and it just ain't. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mystery School, [mysteryschoolrecords.com](http://mysteryschoolrecords.com))

#### SHIT CREEK:

##### *Scene Cred Is Our Name*: 7"EP

##### *Lust for Brains*: 7"EP

Ben Snakepit's singing voice sounds like a long, disorganized beard with food bits in it. And that's not a dig. Brandon Dude Jams—I can't be the first to say this—is really channeling his inner Ryan Young of Off With Their Heads both in with "We're all fucked! You're fucked! I'm the most fucked! Fucked! Whoah oh! Sing with

me!" lyrics and the sounds his mouth makes when he sings. On the uptick, for sure, is the song "Guitarded," which chronicles the Brazilian mahogany from the forest to the factory to Ben's incapable hands playing it, to the awkward position it puts him in. If you don't read the lyrics and just discount the music as "Bearded dudes with hygiene issues music," you could make the argument that it sounds like bears wrestling... but you'd still be a douche. Shit Creek also call out hobopunk because, when you strip it down, they're just base consumers, too. Knowing Ben and having met Brandon, Shit Creek is also a vessel that confronts "midlife" punk. I wouldn't say "crisis" quite yet, but since punk is often hard on the body, the early thirties is when your "body rental" starts becoming "body ownership" and it's time for some reevaluation. Shit Creek do that in song. To wrap it all up, what's that word I'm thinking of? It's a young shoot or twig of a plant, especially one cut for grafting or rooting? Or a descendant of a notable family? Shit Creek are really mad at that word. And, as a favor to me, please name your first LP, *Up*. —Todd (Cred: Dirt Cult / Lust: ADD)

#### SLUDGE: *Self-titled*: CD

Dunno much about these guys, but from what I was able to glean, this was/is a Vancouver band, not the L.A. band Sludge, who ruled the roost and issued a number of releases on Sympathy For The Record Industry in the late '80s/early '90s. The tunes here start off a bit on the punk-circa-1987 side. Around mid-way

they begin to devolve to a sound more apt for their given moniker. The sound quality is a few steps above demo, but on the whole they do/did what they do/did well. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pankratium)

#### SOKEA PISTE: *Oire*: 7"EP

Modern Finnish hardcore. By that, I mean they know their punk roots and they've updated to the black ice, ice-pick, hard-scraping, atmospheric, moody/melodic hardcore ushered in by From Ashes Rise (Alkaen Tuhka Nousti) and His Hero Is Gone, yet has a distinctly European feel, along the lines of El Banda. Paranoid neutrality. Mistrust. I think that language and history are sometimes important in understanding music, so here goes. The land area that now makes up Finland was settled immediately after the Ice Age, but it wasn't until 120 years ago, in 1892, that Finland adopted its own national language. Before 1892, Fins mostly spoke Swedish. (Russia was trying to woo Finland away from Sweden and figured if the Fins had their own national identity, they'd be easier isolate and conquer.) That backfired. During the Second World War, Finland fought twice against the Soviet Union, and lost both times. Finland remained an independent democracy but was forced to stay neutral through the Cold War, until 1991. Finnish has always sounded and looked impenetrable to me as a language. The band's name is "Blind Spot." The 7"'s title is "Symptom." Scandinavia doesn't get much sun in the winter. And it makes sense now that Sokea Piste's punk band legacy is Lama ("depression"), Riistetyt

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("exploited"), Rattus (I'm assuming a play on "rats"), and the out-of-place-name-wise Terveet Kädet ("healthy hands"). A cold blast of ice-filled air from the north. Sounds like snow plows scraping near-empty parking lots sheeted with ice. Recommended. —Todd (Peterwalkee, peterwalkeerecords.com)

#### SOLE:

##### **Nuclear Winter 2—Death Panel: CD**

I've long fancied myself a connoisseur, if you will, of underground hip hop, but though I've long been aware of him and the label he co-founded, I don't think I've ever actually heard anything by Sole. From what I've been able to learn, this is his second foray into "rap as journalism" and applying the Situationist "detournement" concept of "turning expressions of the capitalist system against itself" to hip hop by repurposing mainstream rap jams for political ends. Busdriver, B. Dolan, Mac Lethal, Ceschi Ramos, Kool A.D. from Das Racist, Cadalack Ron, and others join in the shenanigans, providing a hodgepodge of different delivery styles to contrast and compliment Sole's "stream-of-consciousness to the point of occasionally eschewing rhyming altogether" tack here. When it works, solid beats deliver withering political commentary—something that, these days, seems to have long been bred out of the mainstream strain of what was once a revolutionary, topical, and vital musical genre. —Jimmy Alvarado (DIY Bandits)

#### SOMETHING FIERCE:

##### **Don't Be So Cruel: CD**

Fucking love this record. Had to make a concerted effort to *not* listen to it repeatedly and burn out my love for it. Clean and simple sound pulled off brilliantly; catchy with early punk vibes. I can't even pick my favorite track off the record. Another solid win for Dirtnap's collection. Super bummed I missed the band when they played downtown L.A. —Samantha Beerhouse (Dirtnap)

##### **SPIDER FEVER: Whatcha Gonna Do? 7"**

I take one look at the label, expect something interesting at worst, and lo and behold, that's exactly what I get. Gotta love when that happens. Both tracks sound like some great long-lost punk forty-five, one of them rare gems that is just so well executed that it never sounds dated. Loud, fucked up in all the right ways; just plain fuggin' rockin' and over way before you want it to be. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac)

##### **SQUALORA: Hell Is Other People: CD**

Crusty metal-punk stuff, a little Discharge here and a lotta Amebix there. A bit paint-by-numbers, but I found myself really diggin' things more they dug their feet into the more epic, blustery bits that reminded a bit of Killing Joke on an apocalyptic bender. —Jimmy Alvarado (Minor Bird)

#### STARVATION:

##### **Arm Against the Forces: 6"**

Grindcore. Brutal. Short. Members of Asshole Parade and Assassinate The

Scientist. (Wow, really? When I think of that band, grindcore does not readily come to mind. Like, at all.) We've got nine or ten songs of wire-tight "powerviolence" in which a frantic, besotted chipmunk handles vocal duties. Lyrics made up of one or two sentences. "Fuck The Kids" goes, "Globalized market force, transnational holocaust, starving youth, slave driving murders." Song lasts about as long as it took to read that line. You already know if you're gonna get it or not. —Keith Rosson (No Idea)

##### **STEVE ADAMYK: Desecrate: 7"EP**

Powerpop. The equation's ass-simple. Be catchy as hell. Get every instrument bouncing and punchy. After the first listen, hum that shit in the shower. Hum that shit when eating your morning bowl of cereal. Hum that shit when your boss lashes your back. Hum that shit to the cashier at the supermarket. Go home, take your shoes off, and slide across your floor in your underpants humming that shit. It's much easier to do poorly than pull off correctly. Think Tranzmitors. Think candy knife fights. Think style, but not slavery... to that style. Think Go! Ottawa! Go! Steve Adamyk! Nice. —Todd (Taken By Surprise)

#### STRAP STRAPS, THE:



##### **Invisible Knife: 10"**

This is truly a band of mystery. The only information I can find out there on The Strap Straps is from the No Front Teeth website and an incredibly sparse Myspace page... Nothing but "featuring members of the Briefs, Cute Lepers,

and the Spits." It was little to go on, but definitely enough for me to order it. I am glad that I did because this is one of the best things I've heard in a long time! Drums, guitar, two basses, vocals, and insanity. It's very Spits-like but with no keyboards or voice modulation. Short blasts about cops and killing. Songs that will have you singing about "murdering love" in public. So, so good! I keep playing it over and over. You will too! —Ty Stranglehold (No Front Teeth)

##### **SUBURBANITE: Self-titled: 7"**

This is another New York that sounds more like a Boston skinhead band from the '80s than they do anything else. I know the description makes the band sound apocryphal, but if this brand of top notch hardcore is becoming a trend, I wholly welcome it. If SSD had written songs about how isolated and awkward they were in the mid- '80s instead of making a bid for commercial success (and gotten a vocalist worth a shit), *How We Rock* may have sounded something like this. "Not the Same" is one of the meanest hardcore songs I've heard in a long time and the chorus riff is devastating. I like bands that play fast but can pull off slow songs without losing any of the fury. The record has an anxious and paranoid feeling throughout and I get the same feeling reading the lyrics to this as I did when I heard No Comment for the first time. I listened to this like eight times while writing this review and now I don't trust anybody. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack)


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**SURRENDER / 1981: Split: 7"EP**

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**TEENAGE SLANG SESSION:****Session Begins!: CD**

I guess Japan's No People is officially over, and that's a shame, but it appears members have gone on to form an outfit of equal caliber: Teenage Slang Session. Raucous and rowdy, juvenile-at-heart punk with an organ pumping away, and lyrics that hastily shift between silly and sad before the spit even drips off the ceiling. It's impossible to listen to this CD without imagining a horde of drunken peers flopping around and acting ridiculous, and that's an image I love seeing. -Daryl (Underground Government)

**TERRIBLE FEELINGS:****Impending Doom: 7" single**

The cover and the song titles had me thinking this was going to be some dark and heavy music. Definitely not the case. At least musically. Lyrically, yes. Thoughts of death and sinking into depression. The music is a little more light and upbeat. Though not wimpy pop. Filter the Wipers through European punk influences, where's it's tuneful, yet has this unpolished quality about it. The title track is the definite standout, as it has more energy and a stronger structure. That's not to say the flipside, "Death to Everyone" is shabby. Far from it. It's well written, has layers, and adds to the mood. Yet, it's "Impending Doom" that really grabs me. -M.Avrq (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

**TRYSTERO: The Cold Machines: CDEP**

These guys are doing the instrumental post-rock thing like Red Sparrowes or Explosions In The Sky. Only one of the six tracks goes over four minutes, and even that is a pretty modest six minutes, so this is definitely more succinct than the aforementioned bands. Things never get as balls-out crazy as the Don Caballero stuff I've heard, so this is probably not the second coming of technical math rock. There are a lot of pretty passages played very heavily with an occasional violin or sound effect dropping in to add to the proceedings. If you need some atmospheric music in your life, you could definitely do worse. -Adrian (Low Brow Lunacy)

**TURKISH TECHNO: Past Due: LP**

I don't want to sound racist... totally fucking with you. Ever notice that when people say that, the next fuckin' thing out of their mouths is racist? Turkish Techno finally releases a full-length LP. The secret decoder ring to Turkish Techno is realizing that they're coming from the earliest reaches of the Lookout! catalog and they celebrate almost all of it 'til right around to The Oranges Band and when the Donnas had a tens-of-thousands-of-dollars-per-video budget. (Dude, I thought Andy was kidding me that Tilt didn't start out with Cinder singing every song. That first 7" is a trip.) Turkish Techno is itchy and spazzy with pop punk as the infrastructure, but it's Riverside'd up. It's an unfinished off-ramp to an abandoned suburb style of punk. It's desperation as palpable as the smog that gets backed up at the foothills of the San Bernardinos. They've made a house of music worth squatting in. It's a bit abrasive, a bit *Today's Empires*, *Tomorrow's Ashes* Propagandhi with a whole bunch of "fuck yous" and "stupid" thrown in. It's like waking up in a hotel room with the middle cushion of the couch totally missing, the sticky half of an Oreo stuck on the wall, and... wait for it... someone having tracked in human shit over the carpet, barefoot. And no clues as to how any of that happened. Bad ideas, yeah, Turkish Techno's got 'em. And they wear 'em like official-looking badges. And you gotta laugh along, because, if you don't, you'll start crying. -Todd (Wolf Dog / Muy Autentico / Dirt Cult)

**UNION ELECTRIC: "Tunnels"****b/w "An Irish Orphan": 7"**

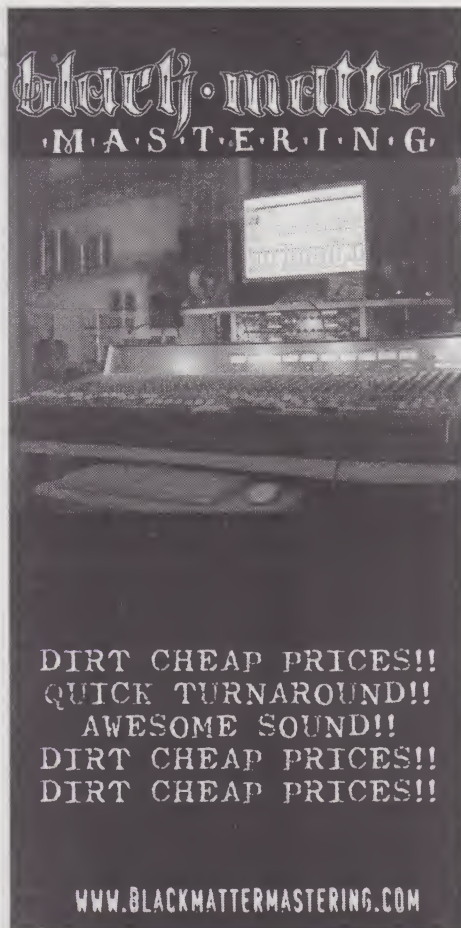
Vaguely alt-country. If you're super into, like, The Gaslight Anthem you might be into this, though when I want to listen to country, I want, like, something I'd hear playing pool at a diner somewhere in Arizona, not just something that could pass on the "modern country" station here in not-Arizona. -Joe Evans III (Rank Outsider)

**UNLEARN: When the Reaper Comes to You, Will You Clap?: 7"**

Black and white war imagery. It never gets old, huh? Uh, yeah it does. But what Unlearn lacks in artistic creativity they more than make up for with atonal, bulldozing guitars complemented by a frenzied yet tight rhythm section. Highly recommended for fans of Kriegshög, Meanwhile, Framtid, and anyone else who's a sucker for ultra distorted D-beat. -Juan Espinosa (Deranged)

**VACANT STATE: Fill the Void: LP**

Heavy on the early '80s Boston hardcore influence. Definite Negative FX vibe, from the awesome vocals, to-the-point lyrics, and on to the crushing music. The first thing that grabbed my attention with this record is the bellowed vocal style. Somewhere between Choke and John Brannon. Loud and clear delivery. The music moves mainly at a mid-tempo lumber, so the words are delivered in the same manner. Even when the speed picks up, you can still get what's going on. There's not one bad song on here, but the ones that really stand out are



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"Don't Care," "Dying World" (I like the beginning with the feedback), "Nothing New," and the songs that close out each side with their slowed-down pace that really creates a dark mood—"Vicious 2Bastards" and "In The End"—which starts to give way to feedback and a repetitive beat to send the point deep into your mind. This will definitely be in my "best records of the year" list. Not that that distinction will improve anyone's life. Just putting that out there. Get this. —M.Avg (Deranged)

#### VACATION: Self-titled: LP

There's a neighborhood just north of downtown Cincinnati called Over-The-Rhine that was formerly one of the most proud and historic neighborhoods in the country. However, on the back of race riots, white flight, swanky malls, and restaurants on the Kentucky side of the river, and an increased number of "undesirable" folks in recent decades, OTR has been considered an uninhabitable black eye for the city. Maybe more of a black hole. This is the community that Vacation calls home. While it may not be explicitly expressed on the record, the feeling of Over-The-Rhine permeates this entire LP. Songs about friends who stick with you and friends who don't, songs about dickhead cops and yuppie bosses, songs about riding your bike through your neighborhood as it gets co-opted by suburbanites one Friday a month, songs about misbehaving with friends on rooftops and writing songs about girls there the next day. Musically, it's

a punk record from the land of Guided by Voices. The drums and bass plod out your daily walk to work while the guitar is the nightlife: ranging from sunny and romantic to wild and thrashy. They thank Main Street OTR in the insert, but, for me, it may as well be the title of the record. I fully recommend it. —Nick Toerner (Mandible/Let's Pretend)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### 12<sup>th</sup> and G, Chino, CA: LP

One yardstick to hold up a comp of a super-down DIY place (1919 Hemphill, 924 Gilman) is looking at the listing on both sides. (This doesn't work as well digitally. I'm looking at you, interwebs.) But don't treat them as sides of a record. Treat them as two shows. Would I go to side A's show? Side B's? And even if you don't know all the bands, are you in good hands? Do places make friends? No—12<sup>th</sup> and G was just a leaky warehouse with a skate ramp, a fridge, and a PA—but the people inside those places can. Friendly, honest, fun-loving, down-for-the-cause people. Not hypothetical circumstances, not a fantasy football version of punk rock or a corporation rock version of punk. This is rent-to-pay-is-not-an-excuse-to-be-a-douche-to-bands punk rock. And the comp. reflects the guiding principles of 12<sup>th</sup> and G. well. It's unmistakably DIY punk at its core, but it's unafraid to lend high fives to bands who also dip into metal, hip hop, and the mellow fare. The strongest testament to this comp is that it's a direct, honest reflection of music that's being made in America

today; of music that came through their doors, to music that they helped nurture by providing a genuinely great place to play. Due to cops on the interwebs (again, fucked by digital) being bummed that the city of Chino wasn't getting their graft and kickbacks—and under the guise of "protecting the children"—the warehouse was shut down in April, 2011. This comp is a love letter. I intentionally didn't mention one single band in this review because it's bigger than just one band. It's a matter of trust, like when Donna Ramone or Horror Tim or Marty Ploy or Christina Zamora say, "Dude, just listen to this band." You put time aside in your busy schedule and just listen to some really good shit. —Todd (On The Real, ontherealrecords.tumblr.com)

#### WASTED: Modern World Is Dead: 7"

The band plays catchy, anthemic punk with fairly complex chord patterns. This is gonna probably sound like a diss, and it's totally not intended to be, but the singer reminds me a little of James Hetfield—and it totally works within the context of the band's overall sound, which has no discernible metal influence to be found anywhere. Guess that means I dug it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Combat Rock Industry)

#### WAX MUSEUMS: Eye Times: LP

Good news, the Wax Museums are still a band, and they have a new full-length on Trouble In Mind. It's not all that different from their debut, but, shit, it would be quite the feat to write another record that good. The songs are still oddball

and jokey, but not nearly as clever. It doesn't even matter though, 'cause they still play some of the catchiest, bizarre, garagey punk rock worth a damn. Don't expect their debut; just expect twistedly energetic songs from these Denton City miscreants. —Daryl (Trouble In Mind, troubleinmindrecs@gmail.com)

#### WEIRD TV: "Sufrir" b/w "Sex": 7"

Olympia, WA's scene darlings making some waves with their vinyl debut following a well-received demo tape. On the musical tip, they wedge themselves somewhere between the classic sounds of the Avengers and the more modern ferocity of Gorilla Angreb and Screaming Females. The lyrics are in español and are riddled with hints at relationship unfulfillment as well as sexual frustration. I'm sure we can all relate with at least one of those subjects. I'm told this is a mere morsel of an appetizer to a full length feast that is currently in production. Get in on the ground floor, homes—Juan Espinosa (Perennial)

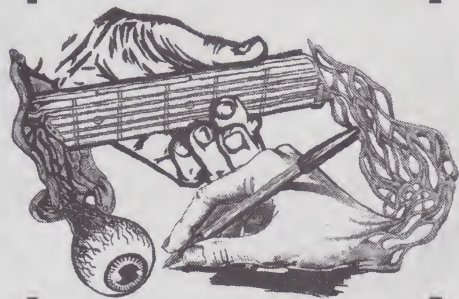
#### WHITE WHALE: "Widow's Peak" b/w "Rats in the Snow": 7"

Great garage rock that brings to mind the more frantic side of Jay Reatard or maybe The Reds, with these weird, but short almost indie-rock breakdowns. Music that to my mind is perfectly suited for the two song single format. I've never heard this band, but after a few spins it's clear I need to seek them out. —Chris Mason (Big Neck)

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In my eyes, all punk worth a damn is somewhat anti-Christian, but Crusades take it to a new level. They combine their disdain for organized religion with melodies four voices deep. Crusades own the night, enlisting the unholy powers of unlikely allies like The Chinese Telephones, From Ashes Rise, and Alice Cooper.

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- **Sacred Plague** c/o Kaleb Keefer, 4919 NE 33rd Ave., Portland OR 97211
- **Salinas**, PO Box 2802, Detroit, MI 48202
- **Shock To The System**, PO Box 400206, Cambridge, MA 02140
- **Silver Sprocket**, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110
- **Small Pool**, 637 W. Woodcrest Ave., Fullerton, CA 92832
- **Smart Guy**, 3288 21st St. #32, SF, CA 94110
- **Snuffy Smiles**, 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku Kita-Ku, Kyoto, 603-8117, Japan
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- **Sorry State**, 111 Old Pittsboro Rd., Carrboro, NC 27510
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# ZINE REVIEWS

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and whether or not you accept trades.



**"Ewok guilty  
of flashing."**

—Nighthawk  
GRUNTED WARNING #12

## BALD CACTUS #28,

8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 32 pgs.

This is the "Class" issue of this long-running U.K. fanzine. Stepping onto obviously well-trodden ground, Bald Cactus tackles the theme well—adeptly working it into the interviews with regional punk bands and a magazine, as well as a centerpiece in which an essay on class precedes thirty-one different answers from various U.K. folks (and one from Portland, OR) to the simple question, "What class do you consider yourself, and is it important?" The multitude of voices chiming in on the topic made a much more productive and stimulating read than the other road Bald Cactus decidedly sidestepped—a singularly-voiced dogmatic treatise. As for my two cents, I enjoyed comparing how punks in the U.K. think about class with how ours do—often overlapping, but different enough to stoke more thought in me. Solid read. —Dave Brainwreck (Bald Cactus, c/o 145-149 Cardigan Rd., Leeds, LS6 1LJ, UK, baldcactus@gmail.com)

## DRUNKEN MASTER #12,

\$7 ppd. (no trades), 8 1/2" x 11", offset w/ full color cover, 68 pgs.

Beautifully printed collection of Lucky Nakazawa's comics. A few pages are made up of his one page Won Ton Not Now work (as seen here in the 'Cake), but the majority is taken up by longer pieces, including one about an MMA fight and a kung-fu-practicing janitor. There are a few guest spots taken up by other artists and a lengthy interview with Josh Barnett, who is apparently a big name in the mixed martial arts world. Knowing nothing about MMA fighting, manga or, really, anything covered in here, I still found it a reasonably interesting read with some very nice illustrations throughout. The comics themselves are generally too silly and nonsensical for me, but there's no denying that Nakazawa can certainly draw. —Keith Rosson (Lucky Nakazawa, 3324 Rowena Ave. Apt. A, LA, CA 90027)

## GOT MYSELF #5,

\$3 U.S./\$4 world ppd., write for trades, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 24 pgs.

I can't say that I read many hardcore fanzines, let alone listen to much hardcore, so I can't say whether this is your run of the mill hardcore zine or not. The layout is a nice cut and paste job with a rad art piece on the cover, "My brain is a mess..." of some brains, hands, and fetuses with some messed-up shit for heads. The zine opens with its authors giving a diatribe against the music scene in his city of Richmond, VA. Good to see that he is doing something to contribute and not just talking shit to his friends in his living room. It's easy to tell from reading through this that this guy is doing it for the love of it. The zine continues with interviews with Wasted Time, Double Negative, and Night Birds. I thought that the interviews were pretty interesting, though I've only heard Wasted Time. There are some good record and zine reviews in here of other things I've never even heard of, too. The highlight of the zine for me is the write up on the Non-Commercial Records discography, as it talks about H100s and the scene surrounding the label. Can't say that I would have read this if I didn't have to review, but it was far from painful to read because of the author's genuine interest. Hardcore buffs will probably dig this zine. —Vincent (Sam Richardson, PO Box 25045, Richmond, VA 23260)

**GRUNTED WARNING #12**, \$1 or trade, 5 3/4" x 8 1/4", copied, 12 pgs.

This Australian cut and paste zine is done by one Stratu. He is known for Blackguard as well. This zine is of the variety that features news clippings from around the world, placed sporadically on the pages. My favorite titles include "Your friend in the fridge," "Girl killed by umbrella," "Man, you're no lesbian," and "Ewok guilty of flashing." One story involves a Bangladeshi man being forced to parade naked through his village with a brick tied to his penis. It was punishment for kidnapping and forcibly marrying a minor. That one was titled "Long dog

for a wrong." Another tale tells of three ninth graders being fingered during a class trip to Washington, D.C. That's weird because I fingered a girl once on an eighth grade class trip. And my mom was on the bus! There is also a story of a man in Portland, Oregon who had his left leg sliced off by a train. That's also weird because a friend of mine knows a dude whose legs were cut off by a train. I love weird news stories, and if you also do, then buy this zine. Well worth it. —Nighthawk (Stratu, PO Box 35, Marrickville NSW 2204, Australia)

## JERK STORE #9,

5 1/2" x 8", 32 pgs, \$?

Cool half-sized zine from Australia that reminds me a bit of the zine you are holding in your hands at this very moment. Coverage is more on the tuneful and poppy spectrum of punk rock. Interviews are with Too Many Daves, Autistic Youth, Joyce Manor, Not Shy Of The DIY Records, And the Hung Ups. There's a great quote in the Too Many Daves interview pertaining to a segment of Dead Kennedys and Bad Religion fans. My favorite piece in this issue was the article on the Embrace (post Minor Threat, pre-Fugazi) LP. That's one of my favorite LPs, and I can remember listening to the demos in high school that would eventually become the album. I had the lyrics memorized within a week! Glad to see there are other people who love this record! As for layouts, this is pretty clean and legible. Photo reproduction is pretty nice as well. "Mericians can order this from It's Alive Records, or you could show your international punk rock solidarity and get in touch direct with editor Alex. —M.Avrq (PO Box 284, Maylands, WA 6931, Australia, jerkstorehq@gmail.com)

## LOOSE LEAF #2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",

photocopied, 14 pgs., \$?

This zine is a gem. The writer describes it as "random occurrences and pointless observations" that go from pretty-damn-funny to piss-your-pants hilarious, especially the piece "In the Potty," which led to guffaws

on the bus that had everyone gawking at me. I re-read this same piece aloud to my friends (as best I could, laughing as hard as I was) who fell over laughing. Even as I write this, weeks after reading it, I'm reminded of the final line of "In the Potty" and I'm laughing. Fucking golden. —Craven Rock (Loose Leaf, PO Box 330824, Murfreesboro, TN 37133)

## MANUAL DEXTERITY April/May 2011, Offset, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 52 pgs.

Manual Dexterity covers the indie side of the DIY scene and focuses on the how-to of a musician's life. The interviewing is intelligent and draws interesting answers from the bands. Cool recurring features include spotlights on record and poster designers and Sixes, where they ask different musicians six quick questions, expecting humorous results. Featured: Survival Guide, The Prizefighters, Basemint Design, Laura Stevenson And The Cans, Nervous Energies, Zack Nipper, and No Friends. —Chris Terry (PO Box 1616, Monticello, MN 55362)

## MANUAL DEXTERITY,

8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 60 pgs.

An indie/punk music zine, leaning more towards the indie side of things, that occupies the strange stylistic purgatory between "zines" and glossier independent "magazines"—it feels like a black and white bootleg of a larger, full-color glossy magazine. And if you follow me, the content is kind of the inverse of that. The dogged enthusiasm of a DIY zine editor is behind all this (interviews, reviews, etc), but it is getting crammed into slick, preconfigured boxes—the same old stock questions that haunt the echo chamber of band interviews and are the crutch of say, A.P. magazine, are all here, which I find boring. The spirit and work are already in place here, but the interviewers could stand to take a lot more risks in their questioning to make this (ahem) rise above. —Dave Brainwreck (PO Box 1616, Monticello, MN 55362, mandexzine.com)



**MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #339**, \$4 US/Can., newsprint, 8 1/2" x 11", 138 pgs. Featured in this issue are Head Cleaners, Midnite Snaxxx, Cokskar, Small Bones, Youth Avoiders, Grown Ups, and Afternoon Gentleman, among others. I'm going to forfeit my punk credentials and admit that I have never heard of any of the aforementioned bands. But that's what MRR's mission has always been: to give the exposure to the previously unexposed and deserving. And for that I applaud them. However, they also see it fit to print not one, but two columns outlining and debating what is or isn't punk "fashion." Speaking as a guy

on the subject that I've read. It broke consent down into five groups. Group 1: enthusiastic consent. Group 5: "verbal 'no' given." The cover essay is about the author's obsession with extreme, bloody American wrestling, how it compares to current world politics and works as an outlet for the writer's frustrations. It was interesting, but could have been way shorter. Then there was a light-hearted piece called "Gay Shame," where a gay writer apologizes for some of the cheesier trends in queer culture. As a yank, this article completely perplexed me. I confused it with the radical queer group in San Francisco called Gay Shame that fights corporate assimilation

interview didn't really hold my interest, and I will probably never make use of the mushroom foraging tips, vegan recipes, resource list—but that's the lesson I had to learn. This zine is not really for me, but for a community separate and distinct from mine, and that is exciting and commendable. —Dave Brainwreck (shoutingshorelines.wordpress.com, shoutingshorelinesli@gmail.com)

#### **SPECIOUS SPECIES #4**,

5 1/2" x 8", \$7, 178 pgs.

It's been a bit since I've seen this. Glad to get it. This recent issue is a huge progression over the early editions. Not that those were bad. But this issue

the-pit bro-core band or what they might have to say. However, people on the margins are always interesting—as is the lead singer of Kingdom, a politically aware and intelligent woman in a scene full of knuckle-dragging meatheads. She's critical of her medium but still believes in it. This conflict makes for a great read. There's also a story/show review where Oister finds out that a teacher he had in high school was in a hardcore band and goes to check them out. Oister's self-critical subtext makes it a personal piece rather than another boring writeup of a show you weren't at and wouldn't go to. Then there are the mandatory record reviews. This

## "She's critical of her medium but still believes in it. This conflict makes for a great read."

—Craven Rock

SPYING ON THE SCENE #5

who wears clothes and shoes until they rot off my body, seriously: who gives a shit? Furthermore, a fan expresses their disappointment with the decision to end a long-running column (Fly's "Peops" page). MRR's explanation for the "cut" is justified by the fact that "MRR is not a permanent position for anyone" and that the space was cleared for "others to have that space." That's funny. How long have Mykel Board, Lefty Hooligan, and George Tabb been on board? I don't necessarily have an issue with any of those columnists or the fact that "Peops" was canceled. I just thought it was a pretty lame excuse, considering that their even longer-running letters section seems utterly useless in this modern digital age. I'm willing to bet that they receive much more email than paper mail, so why not address those letters directly on their website?—Juan Espinosa (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

#### **NOW OR NEVER/TAO OR NEVER**

#19, £ 2.50, 8 3/4" x 11 3/4", offset, 46 pgs.

What we get is a balance of satire and political insight in this British anarcho medley zine. It starts out with a dull humor piece on Colonel Gaddafi and how fashionable he is. Unfortunately, it didn't work at all. Following this was an article about an agent that had been infiltrating U.K. activist circles since 2003. He had been so accepted into these radical communities that he was having intimate relationships within them with no one suspecting. Scary shit, really. There's something in here about the gentrification of Stratford—a London neighborhood—for the upcoming Olympics. A piece in here on sexual consent is probably the most in-depth and descriptive articles

of the queer community. By the time I figured out they were talking about something else entirely, I had all but finished the article, so its humor was lost on me. No one's fault. Besides that, there was more political writing as well as some record and book reviews (one of which was of a book in the bible, which was kind of funny). The flipside, Tao Or Never, isn't really the other half of a split at all. It's just them making a fake hippie, New Age satire mag. There's a lot in here and, overall, it's pretty good. It's offset and really slick, which brings me to some of my complaints. With the effort they put into making a quality-looking product, they could just as easily have done a better job of editing. Some of these articles are way too long and become a slog by the time they get to their point. The sentences are often poorly constructed and pack in too many words, getting in the way of my reading and enjoyment. It greatly hinders the quality of the zine and often sent me into autopilot reading. Overall, it's pretty good, though. —Craven Rock (PO Box 487, Thorpe Road Mail Centre, Norwich, NR5 8WE, 07528 655941, enquiries@nowornever.org.uk)

#### **SHOUTING SHORELINES #2**,

8 1/2" x 7", 56 pgs., \$?

A zine by (and for...) the Long Island punk community. Location is the cohesion here, which I think works to its benefit. I always kind of write off Long Island as this gruff-pop-punked sixth borough of NYC, and reading about the troubles, frustrations, and efforts to keep tent poles down there as rents rise and more people leak out into Brooklyn and beyond, helped me shake that notion. Those aspects of the zine interested me most—the show reviews and band

is top to bottom improvements. First off, this publication is now perfect bound, offset printed, interviewees are interesting, etc., etc. This issue is based around "environment," with the idea that it goes beyond animal habitat. It also includes urban dwelling and the issues it faces. This is most prevalent in the discussions with Dominik Mosur from San Francisco's Randall Museum, Gray Brechin, author of Imperial San Francisco, Sam Bake from the Never Cry Wolf sanctuary, as well as the article by Julian Martin on mountain top removal. For me, the most interesting section in this issue was titled "Environments," from editor Joe Donohoe. Other interviews include Aaron Cometbus (this one had me stoked for a good week), Jello Biafra, V.Vale, Daphne Gotlieb, Kim Stringfellow, Richie Unterberger, Lynn Rubenzer, and more. There are also poems and fiction throughout. Worth your time, and sure to last for a good solid week—or more—of reading. —M.Avrq (3345 20th St., SF, CA 94110, lbelly.donohoe@gmail.com)

#### **SPYING ON THE SCENE #5**, \$3.00 or

trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 28 pgs.

Enthusiastic punk zine from Tampa. It mostly consists of lengthy interviews. There's one with Dave Tejas of Krum Bums. Krum Bums aren't the kind of punk band that I would make an effort to check out, but the interview was solid. The editor, Oister, is a great interviewer and really got the lead singer to open up. He ended up talking passionately about Austin, which made me want to visit the town. The interview with Kingdom, a hardcore band out of Philly, was especially interesting and insightful. Normally, the last thing I would care about is a windmill-and-cum-faces-in-

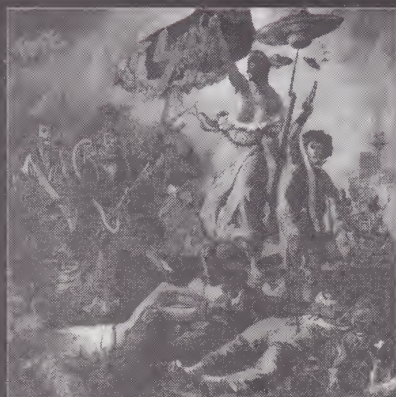
is a solid music zine that I expect will only improve. —Craven Rock (Oister c/o SOTSHQ, 13049 Delwood Rd., Tampa, FL 33624)

#### **TH3EE DAYS AWAY #20**, 200 Yen, 5" x 7 1/4", copied, 40 pgs.

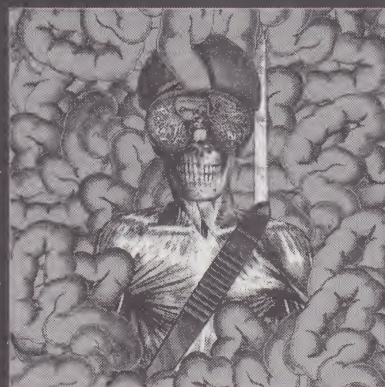
First, I will mention that these folks in Japan ask 200 Yen for this zine. According to the internets, this converts to \$2.61. So maybe just send \$3 to cover postage. Second, I will mention that this was sent to me from my friend Akihiro, who plays in Worthwhile Way. If you haven't already, check them out. Very cool stuff. Back to the review. The majority of this zine is in Japanese, so brush up on the language of The Land of the Rising Sun. This issue is their anniversary issue, which I think means that they've put out twenty issues in one year. While that might be wrong, it would be very impressive. There are interviews with The Wild, Sub Stream, and Worthwhile Way. Record, book, and movie reviews are also featured, as well as a Rakugo review! Rakugo is a live show, in which the lone performer tells a comical story, using a paper fan and a small cloth as props. Sounds fun. You will also find a show review of Midway Still on one page, just before a couple pages of games, which I cannot figure out. But that's just because I'm stupid, not because it's in Japanese. Finally, a film review for The Sketch of Mujo, which is a documentary, is provided. Overall, this is a very good zine, with plenty of material. The only downfall is that most of it is in Japanese, and that's only a downfall if you can't read Japanese. —Nighthawk (Eager Beaver, 16-2 Higashibun Inoshiri Wakimachi, Mima-City Tokushima, 779-3602 Japan)



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**TRUST #148**, 2.50 Euros, offset, 8 1/2" x 11 3/4", 68 pgs. This issue of the long running German fanzine, Trust, features interviews with Vic Bondi (Articles Of Faith), Pettybone, and Glasses to accompany the standard zine fare of columns, reviews, and ads galore. I'm very impressed by the high-resolution printing and the quality paper this is printed on. It accentuates the top-notch live band photos strewn about the issue. There's just one problem with this zine for me. What is it? I'm not allowed to tell you. However, if you happen to come across a copy of this somewhere, just flip through it. I'm sure you'll figure it out. —Juan Espinosa (Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany)

**WORD ON THE STREET:  
DC SIDEWALKS 2008-2011**, 4 3/4" x 5 1/2", 32 pgs.

Word indeed! A strong entrance into the canon of, for lack of a proper term, "coffee table zines." Within lies photos of twenty-nine different squares of sidewalk that this (anonymous) artist somehow divined upon (does D.C. have a wet cement directory?). The extent of this is impressive on its own, but better yet is what's conveyed when the photos are successively digested. The art varies from sidewalk to sidewalk, but, together, form a visceral sort of pictographic narrative—Black Flag bars ("CAN'T DECIDE ANYTHING,

SUMMER 2010") to existential pontification ("Just trying to live," "Does the fun ever start?") to donuts living the chaos to bleak Dead Moon lyrics ("END OF SUMMER 2010"). Throughout all this is a recurring dead dinosaur waxing maudlin ("heart sick"), nihilistic ("fuck everything"), or in my favorite photo in the whole zine, just walking around listening to Bent Outta Shape on a walkman. It's telling, I guess, but I don't know about whom, that that photo in particular struck me more than most sentiments aped in any zine I've read lately. The spirit of this whole thing, and definitely the drawing style, are in the vein of Scam/Erick Lyle's graffiti. I can't wait to go hunt these down next time I'm in D.C., because as great as this zine is, I know these are way cooler to walk over in person. —Dave Brainwreck (W.O.T.S., PO Box 73691, WDC 20056)

**xXXXx**, \$6ppd. in U.S., half-size, offset with screen printed and letter pressed cover, 31 pgs. On the cover there is a subtitle of "straight edge erotic fiction." I must say that I was quite interested in finding out about what lay inside. The four stories (all by Xartnoosex) were each a disappointment. Admittedly, I'm not an expert in the field of either straight edge or erotica, but I can attest to the fact that these stories were neither straight edge nor erotic. The first story was told in first person from

the perspective of a female who was, if memory serves, a graphic designer. She had, for all intents and purposes, a fuck buddy who was a father and a teacher. She had a fantasy of being the female in a male-female-male threesome. Such a threesome comes to fruition at the end of the story. The reasons this one wasn't edge are twofold. First, there's promiscuity. Second, there's no indication of people being straight edge. There was a real missed opportunity here: Youth Of Today's We're Not in This Alone could have been playing in the background during the climax. Why wasn't it erotic? It had some physical detail, but failed to really launch into the mental details of lust and desire. The same goes for the second story about lesbians in a committed relationship, also told from the first person. In fact, that's why I don't think any of these stories are really erotic. They have sexuality but lack sensuality. Anyhow, the second story gets edge points for being about a committed couple. While it lacks anything that deems it not edge, there are no indications of why it is particularly straight edge. The missed opportunity here is not using this line: "She bound me up like she bound herself to the X." The third story (and the first of two in third person) was about a straight committed couple whose members were in two separate touring bands. This story had the most almost edge stuff happening. There was

the committed relationship, a mention of a Gather T-shirt, and the term, and I quote, "xblowjobx." (Quick side note: I had to look up Gather. They are shitty, metallic bullshit. Steer clear!) A T-shirt does not straight edge make; I have seen many people with drinks in their hands wearing shirts of straight edge bands. Also, uttering "xblowjobx" just means that you've spent way too much time on message boards and AIM. Missed opportunity: editing out "xblowjobx." The fourth story was about a girl telling some guy on house arrest about a root beer keg party that turned into an orgy. Okay, quite plainly, can somebody explain how an orgy is straight edge? What about root beer keg parties, are those a real thing? The root beer keg party was in celebration of some guy in recovery's fifth year sober. That's about as edge as it got. Again, not playing We're Not in This Alone was a real missed opportunity. Overall, I would say that xXXXx merits the subtitle of "sex stories that don't involve drugs or alcohol." If that truly disheartens you and you would still like to spend \$6 on actual straight edge erotic fiction, I will write you a piece for that \$6—and mine won't have typos. I must warn you, though, that it will be only slightly less of a rip off than this rag. —Vincent (artnoose@yahoo.com US / littleblackcart.com World)

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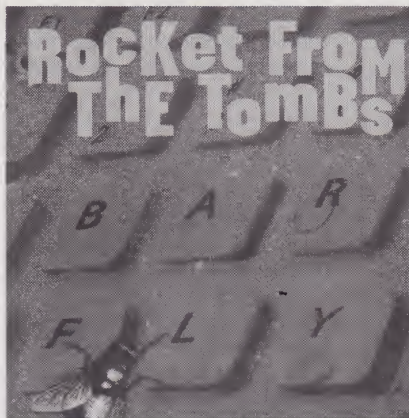
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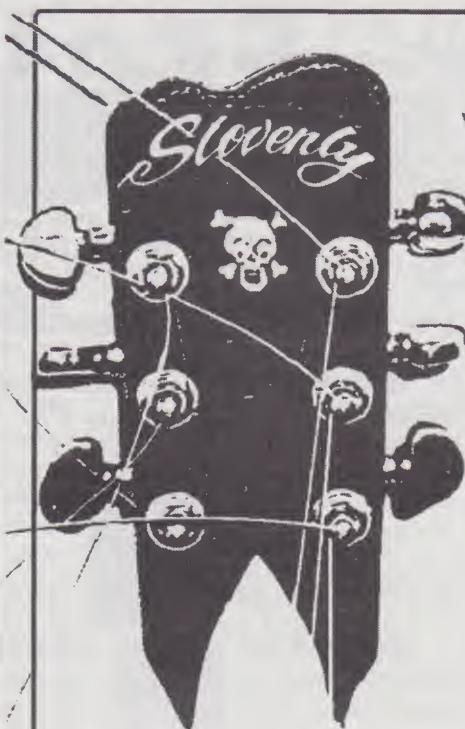
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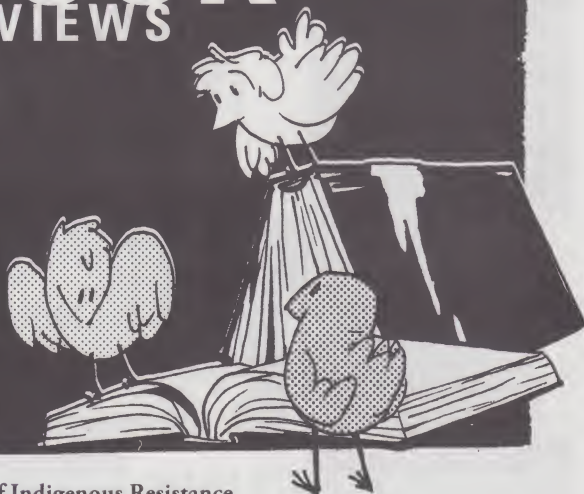
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# BOOK REVIEWS



## **500 Years of Indigenous Resistance** *B Gord Hill*

The story of smallpox being introduced to Native Americans and the decimation of the First Nation people has been well-documented, but there was always something about that story that didn't sit well with me. I've sat in classes with Native Americans and Hawaiians and watched them squirm in discomfort while the smallpox story makes

lost, without an identity, and it is within this vacuum that the music of Kraftwerk emerged.

Kraftwerk recorded a few records before Wolfgang joined the group. Although interesting, the records utilized an electronic flute and violin. Once Wolfgang joined the group, the sound of Kraftwerk was synthesized. The chapters on the formation of the group are the most interesting. Wolfgang was more than a percussionist; he was also somewhat of an inventor. Taking apart a basic drum machine, he added contact microphones to a rudimentary pad, which triggered the sounds of a snare, kick drum, and hi-hat from the drum machine. It was this invention where human controlled a machine. Further chapters detail the rise of Kraftwerk, their various tours, and continued work in the studio. For a studio geek like myself, I devoured these pages quickly, looking for clues as to how they developed their sound.

Like all machines, the parts of Kraftwerk began to wear out and Wolfgang and his other percussion battery-mates left Kraftwerk. And like many band break ups, this one spiraled into a depressing account of lawsuits. (The first printing of this book was mentioned in the lawsuit and the immaturity of all those involved surfaced, which casts a shadow over the book.) However, the creative details of the recording process make up for any sour taste that the final chapters may leave. —Steve Hart (Sanctuary Publishing, 45-53 Sinclair Rd., London W14 0NS, United Kingdom)

## **Taking Punk to the Masses: From Nowhere to Nevermind** *By Jacob McMurray, 233 pgs, with DVD*

Just recently, I got a small taste of something everyone is going to have to come face to face with as they get older—realizing that something that you can still remember like it was yesterday actually took place twenty fucking years ago. For me (and I'm sure many others) it was

**“I got a small taste of something everyone is going to have to come face to face with as they get older—realizing that something that you can still remember like it was yesterday actually took place twenty fucking years ago.”**

—Andy Conway  
*Taking Punk to the Masses*

them sound weak and unable to defend themselves. By the succumbing to smallpox, my friends felt embarrassed for their ancestors, like there was something wrong with them. This history, of course, doesn't take into account the absolute filth the European occupiers lived in. It doesn't mention the bizarre quasi-religious superstitions the Europeans believed in (Queen Elizabeth of England rarely bathed throughout her life)—instead, history condemns indigenous people as collateral damage.

*500 Years of Indigenous Resistance* is an attempt to rectify this history. From 1492 to present day, indigenous people have resisted the European onslaught. Gord Hill details battles between the indigenous people and the colonizers. While civilization (in the European sense) was seen as mutually beneficial, *500 Years* points out how European hegemony has been, and still is, resisted against by indigenous people from South America, Central America, and North America despite going against the machinations of civilization. I'd like to see this book used in history classes as a supplement or a contrary point of view from what is normally taught. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

## **Kraftwerk I Was a Robot** *By Wolfgang Flur*

Kraftwerk has always been an enigma to me. Their music seemed so cold and distant but precise and bizarre. They seemed either less than—or more than—human. Like robots with a human head. The drummer of Kraftwerk, Wolfgang Flur, puts a human heart behind the beats of the motorik quartet. Post World War II, the children of the Germans who survived the war found themselves

Nirvana's landmark, breakthrough album *Nevermind* turning twenty. 1991 was famously declared “the year punk broke” by a documentary of the same name, as it was when Nirvana burst onto the mainstream, bringing with them a hype around “grunge” and the “Seattle Sound” that really captured my imagination as a young kid. I probably looked like a real dipshit in my flannel shirt, but so did everyone else at my school and at schools around the world.

No matter what people might think of them, Nirvana brought a lot of attention to some really cool bands and record labels coming out of the Pacific Northwest at that time. Those who decided to seek out bands that Kurt Cobain praised in interviews might have discovered a gem that turned them onto punk rock/ indie rock/ metal etc., for life. This book really was the perfect reminder of how much of a rich history Nirvana came from and how their impact is still being felt to this day, two decades later.

Jacob McMurray's *Taking Punk to the Masses* is the photographic companion to Seattle's Experience Music Project exhibition, where hundreds of rare artifacts from the Seattle scene—many to do with Nirvana—are on display. Shots of old fliers, iconic guitars, classic records, and familiar articles of clothing accompany an oral history of the scene with testimonials from many of its most important players (including members of Nirvana, Mudhoney, and Soundgarden, as well as Sub Pop founders Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt). The book also comes with a DVD that contains footage of some of the interviews. From the Wipers to the Melvins, Pearl Jam to the Shins, this book covers a lot of eclectic ground and you'll find a new treasure on every page. While I might not be able to adjust to stuff I liked when I was a kid being old enough to be “classic rock,” I'm really glad it was what I listened to then. This book is a really awesome trip down memory lane. —Andy Conway (Fantagraphics Books, Fantagraphics.com)



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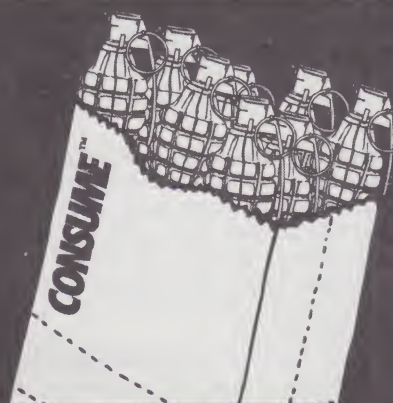
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## White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race

By Maxwell Tremblay and Stephen Duncombe, 368 pgs.

Why did all those English bands try to play reggae? What's up with the CBGBs scene and swastikas? Isn't "anti-racist skinhead" an oxymoron? If a Puerto Rican guy sang "White Minority," is it racist? If 1990s punk was so P.C., then why was it whiter than the supposedly bigoted mainstream? Why do white suburbanites move to the ghetto in the name of rock'n'roll?

If you've ever asked any of those questions, then please read *White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race*. It's 350 pages of interview excerpts, fanzine articles, and academic essays that won't give you answers so much as give you the power to ask, and consider, even more.

Sham 69 frontman Jimmy Pursey describes punk as, "... just getting up onstage, singin' about fings that's 'appened to you in your life, an' also keepin' the crowd in wiv wot you're doin'," and an academic essay by Daniel S. Traber, that is full of labyrinthine brain-twisters such as, "Underpinning punk's appropriation of otherness is the theory that social categories are fluid constructs that can be accepted, rejected, or hybridized at will, and this belief disrupts the notion that identity is fixed, that there is anything natural or concrete about one's subjectivity."

The editors' brief intros to each piece contextualize the selections within their own theories and punk at large. They are generally clear and direct, but midway through, I was considering a drinking game

**"It shows that *punk* is constantly morphing, that it can mean conflicting things to people at the same show and that it will always seem fresh to the people getting involved, that it will always be...*inchoate*."**

—CT Terry, *White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race*

The interesting thing about punk—which provides a wide breadth of material for the book, but makes definitive conclusions impossible—is that it is constantly evolving and has always meant different things to the people involved. Therefore, what was subversive in 1970s New York was old hat in 1980s L.A. and incredibly offensive in 1990s Toronto. The editors, punk academics Maxwell Tremblay and Stephen Duncombe (author of *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Underground Culture*), acknowledge this paradox and use the intro to contrast their formative years in the nihilist early '80s and the bookish '90s.

After the intros and a terrific forward by *Afro-Punk*'s James Spooner, *White Riot* is divided into seven sections that span from pre-punk romanticism of blackness (beatniks, White Panther Party), to the questionable shit that went on in punk's initial incarnation (Nazi fetishes, "Guilty of Being White"...), to the white power punk of the '80s and '90s, to British punk's back and forth with Jamaican reggae, to zine essays and letters from punks of color in the '80s and '90s, to reports on international punk.

Since this is a collection of already published writing, the styles vary wildly. Within a dozen pages, you have an interview where

revolving around their overuse of the word "inchoate." They usually leave the reader to draw their own conclusions: that you can't just snap your fingers and shake off centuries of ingrained racism, and that even the most well-meaning of white folks born before the Civil Rights era are going to have some latent racial hang-ups.

The question of punk's whiteness is never explicitly answered, though some essays link it to middle class privilege: so far, the people who have been accepted for long enough to get complacent, then angry enough at their own laziness to rebel, are overwhelmingly white. In lieu of a conclusion from the editors, the book implies that punk's future is global, by ending with a series of articles on international scenes in Asia and Latin America. It shows that punk is constantly morphing, that it can mean conflicting things to people at the same show—never mind in different countries and decades—and that it will always seem fresh to the people getting involved, that it will always be...inchoate. —Chris Terry (Verso, versobooks.com)



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## From the Back of the Room: DVD

Many men and women perceive riot grrrl as the entire scope of female involvement in punk music, or at least as a kind of transition from The Dark Ages of Sexism in Punk Rock. I know this concept sounds ridiculous because of, let's see, X, the Slits, Polystyrene, Poison Ivy, and every other woman who decided to start a band in 1976, but it's actually a pretty common attitude—especially within younger generations—and I would venture to say especially within the zine community. How often in 2011 do you see the cut and pasted "Revolution Grrrl Style Now" on the pages of zines by young women? It's an example of stagnation in the dialogue about feminism in punk. But it certainly wasn't their fault that riot grrrl was exploited by the mainstream media and subsequently reduced to this catchphrase and marketing image. It was a movement of young, white, middle class women whose poster child was an attractive, young, white woman. How could someone not capitalize on that?

*From the Back of the Room* is a documentary that spans over thirty years and seeks to overcome this gap in dialogue by looking at feminism coupled with issues of race, class, motherhood, and gender. Oden interviews Chris Boarts-Larson of *Slug and Lettuce*, Lisa from Oroku, Maygun from *Profane Existence*, Cristy C. Road, Anna Joy Spring from Blatz, Condenada, Laura from Kylesa, Annie from the Soviettes, and over thirty others. The execution and presentation is excellent. The scope is a fantastic sample of women who felt outside of, or indifferent to, the



**“The director’s evenhanded presentation of these experiences is a mirror image of the complexity of feminism—it’s a genuine and authentic exploration where a dogmatic agenda could so easily be found instead.”**

—Katie Dunne  
*From the Back of the Room*

concepts of feminist punk in the ‘90s and women who have specifically and adamantly decided to play music with other women for political or personal reasons. The director’s evenhanded presentation of these experiences is a mirror image of the complexity of feminism itself beyond the parameters of just DIY scenes and punk music—which means it’s a genuine and authentic exploration where a dogmatic agenda could so easily be found instead. —Katie Dunne (From The Back Of The Room Productions, 4516 Blagden Ave., Washington, DC 20011)

***Trantastic: DVD***

Imagine if Christopher Guest and his crew behind classics like *This Is Spinal Tap* and *Best in Show* somehow ran afoul of an evil wizard and, as a payback, the wizard put a terrible curse on them that took away their ability to be funny; endearing, compelling, and capable of making anything that could pass for a halfway decent “mockumentary.” Oh, the wizard also made them all homophobic assholes and even gave Harry Shearer a dumb Foo Fighters tattoo. Now apply all of those attributes (even the Foo Fighters tattoo) to the gang that made *Trantastic* and see why I had a terrible time watching this. This is fucking awful. Not

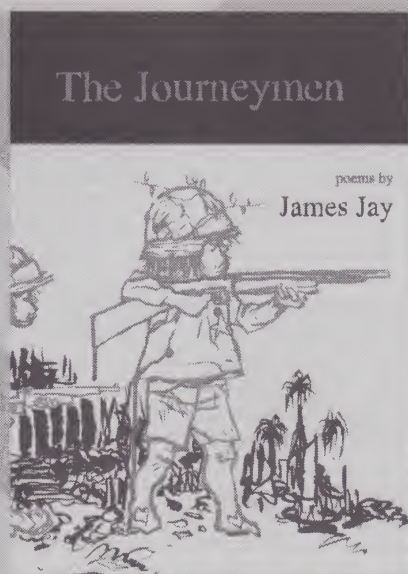
only is it awful, but it’s filled with a really ugly and hateful attitude towards the gay and transgender community.

*Trantastic* is a fake documentary about a bunch of straight men who dress in drag, but yet are really deeply offended that people assume they’re gay because of that. Great premise, right? The joke is that they’re all slovenly, unkempt guys with facial hair, bad wigs, and ill-fitting clothing that they probably found in a dumpster behind a sex shop. There are also enough ugly homophobic slurs within the first ten minutes to make any sane person turn this shit off. If the creators of this tripe read this and think that I couldn’t take or didn’t get the joke here, I’ll say this—you didn’t say or do anything funny. This gets my highest recommendation to avoid. —Andy Conway (Scumbag Movies, scumbagmovies.com)



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